GUARDIAN WEEKLY March 24 1996

Boxing WBC heavyweight title contest

Tyson regains crown

Richard Williams in Las Vegas

DID anyone seriously imagine there could be any other kind of ending? After six minutes and 50 seconds of boxing here on Saturday the natural order reasserted itself when Mike Tyson deprived Frank Bruno of the World Boxing Council heavyweight title by a technical knockout after a whirlwind of punches that left the defending champion's senses in disarray.

But in case anyone should think that it was easy pickings for the challenger, Tyson's demeanour at the end of the fight showed the significance he attached to success in the first stage of his attempt to reunify the three heavyweight titles. He fell to his knees, bowing at Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam, who was sitting at ringside. And, when the new champion had the WBC belt safely around his midriff, he came to the edge of the platform to show it off to the world.

Bruno had held the title for 197 days, an achievement of which he can be justifiably proud and which will ensure him a special standing among his fellow countrymen for as long as he lives. This, they will say, was a man who got into a boxing ring with Mike Tyson not once but twice; he will be admired for the dogged courage with which, in the course of a 14-year professional career, he found ways to overcome a complete lack of innate aptitude for the game's techniques.

Tyson, of course, is the most natural of fighters, elemental in his ferocity and his understanding of how to use his limited stature against bigger opponents. Yet it must be said that the Bruno of 1996 could not match the achievement of his younger self, who had lasted five rounds in 1989 and briefly but memorably hurt a man who at the time looked the most invincible fighter since Marciano.

Saturday's opening round must nevertheless have been among the most impressive Bruno has fought. Tyson rushed at him straight away, looking to get inside his guard. Bruno opened with textbook left jabs and held his own in a series of furious exchanges until, with only 10 seconds left on the clock, Tyson unloaded a long straight right which caught Bruno on the left eye. Bruno retreated to his corner and George Francis began working on a deep cut an inch long.

Effectively the fight ended at that moment. Thereafter Bruno's prime concern was to protect the eye from further injury; he never got a chance to devise a counter-attack. The jab had lost its authority. Now Tyson found a more tentative response every time he walked forward.

Half a minute into the third round, Tyson launched the assault that broke the champion. It began with two big lefts to the jaw, followed by a right and a left to the head which forced Bruno back into the ropes. Bruno's defence was now non-existent. Tyson unleashed a series of three right-hand uppercuts. A further left and right as Bruno fell against the ropes were superfluous. Referee Mills Lane was already moving in to save Bruno from further punishment.

Cricket World Cup final: Australia v Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka light up the world

Mike Selvey in Lahore

SRI LANKAN cricket came of age on Sunday under the spangle of the Gaddafi Stadium floodlights when they beat Australia by seven wickets to win the World Cup, 15 years after they became a Test-playing nation. They are the first side to win the trophy after batting second.

It was the stuff of dreams for Sri Lanka and their captain Arjuna Ranatunga, who was presented with the giant antique-silver trophy by Pakistan's prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

Twenty-two deliveries remained when Ranatunga, who as a 17-year-old had batted in his country's first Test, leaned back and delicately ran Glenn McGrath to the third-man boundary to reach 47 and launch celebrations in Colombo that will last for weeks.

At the other end Aravinda de Silva, master batsman, raised his arms in triumph before disappearing into a mob of team-mates and supporters. In the previous over the finest of leg-glances had given him his 12th boundary to take him to 103 and a place in the World Cup history books alongside Clive Lloyd and Viv Richards as the only batsmen to score a century in a final. Together the pair had compiled a fourth-wicket partnership of 97 — De Silva finishing with 107 — and overhauled with ease Australia's modest 241 for seven.

Earlier De Silva and Asanka Gurusinha had put things back on course with a third-wicket partnership that yielded 125 after Australia had dismissed the pinch-hitters Jayasuriya and Kaluwitharana by the sixth over.



Victory waltz . . . Sri Lanka begin the celebrations which were destined to last all night PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN PARKS

The impact of this victory will be massive. For years Sri Lankan cricket has been treated shabbily by many countries, its talents going unrecognised.

This was not a victory achieved against the odds, for Sri Lanka were no underdogs. It was founded on spin bowling that kept the Australia innings in check, at a time when it might have pressed on to a more competitive total, on top-class catching in the deep and on batting of the highest calibre.

Australia, by contrast, never quite found their way after a start that had seen them to 137 for one by the 27th over. Only Mark Taylor (74) and Ricky Ponting, who made 45, looked in any measure of control while they were at the crease, adding 101 for the second wicket after Mark Waugh had chipped a gentle catch to square leg.

On this of all days the Australia batsmen chose not to dig in but get themselves out, with Taylor caught on the sweep, Ponting bowled making too much room to cut, Steve Waugh turning his bat too early and skying a catch to long-on from the leading edge, and Stuart Law slicing to backward point. No one sold himself dearly.

They were hampered by the combined spin of Muralitharan, Dharmasena, De Silva, whose three wickets meant it was quite a day for him, and Jayasuriya. From the 24th over, when Taylor hit the last of his eight boundaries — there was a midwicket six from him as well — until Bevan struck two fours in the penultimate over, the rope had been crossed only once, in the 43rd over, when Bevan pulled Dharmasena for six. When Australia wanted to crack on there was nothing left.

Nothing can detract from the quality of Sri Lanka's batting, however. Just as in their semi-final they lost the benefit of an explosive start, with Jayasuriya deemed run-out by the third umpire — a harsh decision — and Kaluwitharana mistiming a pull to midwicket.

Thereafter it was exhibition stuff led by De Silva, who on-drove his first ball for three with such majesty that runs for him looked an inevitability. He found support from Gurusinha, whose normally reserved play gave way to an assault on Warne that culminated in one of the strokes of the tournament, a pull cudgelled miles over long-on. With Sri Lanka always up with the required run-rate, it was a needlessly rash stroke that cost him his wicket as he heaved mightily at Reiffel and was bowled, having made 65 from 99 balls.

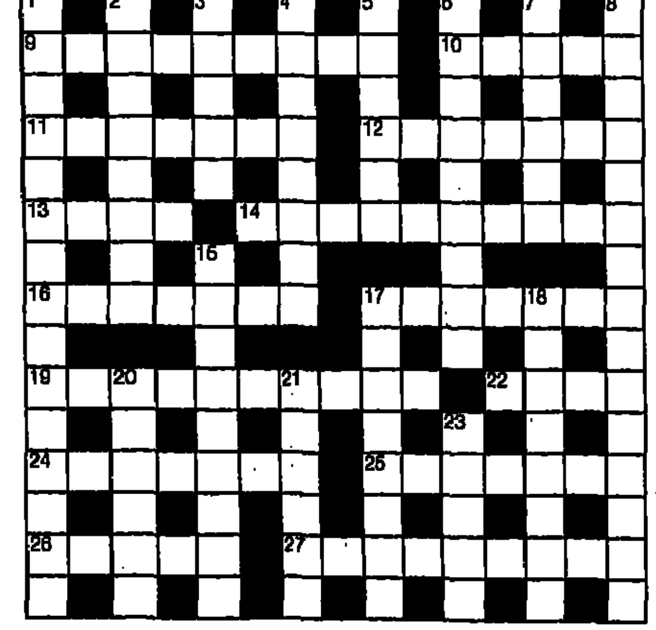
But any hopes of a breakthrough for Australia were quickly dashed with the appearance of Ranatunga, who began as he was to finish, running a ball fine to the third-man boundary. He never looked back. His gem of an innings, scored from 37 balls, took the pressure from his partner De Silva, who was quite content to work the ball around before bursting into life again with a series of wristy strokes to confirm his merited Man of the Match award.

Scoreboard

AUSTRALIA
M A Taylor c Jayasuriya b De Silva
M E Waugh c Jayasuriya b Vaas
R T Ponting b De Silva
S R Waugh c De Silva b Dharmasena
S K Warne st Kaluwitharana b Muralitharan
S G Law c De Silva b Jayasuriya
M G Bevan not out
I A Healy b De Silva
P R Reiffel not out
Extras (lb10, w11, nb1)
Total (for 7, 50 overs) 241
Fall of wickets: 36, 137, 152, 156, 170, 202, 205.
Bowling: Wickremasinghe 7-0-38-0; Vaas 6-1-30-1; Muralitharan 10-0-31-1; Dharmasena 10-0-47-1; Jayasuriya 8-0-43-1; De Silva 9-0-42-3.

SRI LANKA
S T Jayasuriya run out
K S Kaluwitharana c Bevan b Fleming
A P Gurusinha b Reiffel
P A de Silva not out
A Ranatunga not out
Extras (b1, lb4, w5, nb1)
Total (for 3, 46.2 overs)
Fall of wickets: 12, 23, 148.
Bowling: McGrath 8.2-1-28-0; Fleming 6-0-43-1; Warne 10-0-58-0; Reiffel 10-0-49-1; M E Waugh 6-0-35-0; S R Waugh 3-0-15-0; Bevan 3-0-12-0.
Umpires: S A Bucknor and D R Shepherd.
Sri Lanka won by seven wickets.

Cryptic crossword by Orlando



Across
9 Bush acquires English to become an American author (9)
10 Ulster award for tearful queen (5)
11 Government leader, in the end, has to cheat (7)
12 Game making some American a star (7)
13 Number of sheets — about a million (4)
14 Free from self-contradiction, what's inside is outside and centre of outside is inside (10)
16 Red meat turns green (7)
17 Gas for glass? (7)
19 American author turns blue in tree (4,6)
22 Caledonian tax (4)
24 Chagrin, being put out with bending (7)
25 Former model including model living no longer . . . (7)
26 . . . moribund, already in grave, partly (5)
27 Marginal entry in Chambers about battle? (9)

Down
1 Hasn't seal finder rocks off the Northumberland coast? (3,5,7)
2 Ankle was twisted in ballet (4,4)
3 Tree-top tall, and part below the trunk (5)
4 Sponge of leader at sea (8)
5 2's Roman god embracing Anglican? (6)
6 Yoko doesn't dance alone (2,4,3)
7 Prophet endlessly devouring American sweet (6)
8 Leave people ordering otters in a shop (10,5)
15 University city, radio village (9)
17 Goes on providing revenue (8)
18 Crone with cat changing into bird (8)
20 A portion of sweet and sour Chinese hedgehog (6)
21 Member is with Tory leader, being one skilled in the laws (6)
23 Guide for young ox (5)

Last week's solution

P H H P S C F T
ITINERANT LARGO
C L D S A E I W
TEARGAS TRAPEZE
U R E P I R N R
RAIN TOUCHANDGO
E T H R N F
PAYMENT DUCHESS
O A I E Q T
STANDSTILL SUER
T G S H A S I E
COASTER TOPSPIN
A R O I O E A G
REIGN VERYLIGHT
D C E E Y L E H

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Children give victory signs as they flee in a car damaged by Israeli strikes on the town of Nabatiyeh in south Lebanon PHOTOGRAPH: ADNAN HAJJ

West in disarray over Israeli offensive

Guardian Reporters

WESTERN efforts to broker a diplomatic solution to the fighting in Lebanon were in disarray on Monday as Israel rejected French calls for a ceasefire and British ministers issued contradictory statements.

France's foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, met the Israeli prime minister, Shimon Peres, before travelling to Syria and Lebanon on Tuesday in a move that was conspicuously unco-ordinated with its European Union partners, and contrary to United States backing for Israel's offensive.

But Mr Peres said bluntly on Monday that he was not ready to negotiate an end to the five-day-old air and artillery blitz against Hizbullah guerrillas, code-named Operation Grapes of Wrath.

"It is too early to negotiate," Mr Peres said when asked what were Israel's conditions for an end to the most serious military action in the Middle East since the Arab-Israeli peace process took off in September 1993. An Israeli official said Israel wanted the US, not France, to mediate.

The United Nations Security Council met on Monday night, but the debate ended without a vote or a formal statement. Lebanon's UN ambassador, Samir Moubarak, urged the council to provide Lebanon with a massive assistance programme "to overcome the suffering and casualties". He said the new cycle of violence had been "triggered on purpose by the Israelis to serve the electoral ambitions of the Israeli government".

Meanwhile, Katyusha rockets fired by Hizbullah guerrillas slammed into northern Israel again on Tuesday, the sixth day of cross-border fighting. Rocket attacks have wounded 45 people in a week. In response, Israeli air and artillery attacks have forced up to half a million people to flee their homes in Lebanon. Israel stopped for two minutes on Tuesday to remember victims of the Nazi holocaust. The silence was observed by Israeli forces engaged in Operation Grapes of Wrath, but they quickly resumed air attacks, including a raid on a Palestinian refugee camp.

European peace efforts seemed doomed after EU diplomats criticised France for ignoring mechanisms for co-ordinating foreign policy, and complained that Paris was seeking to enhance its own role after President Jacques Chirac's recent visit to Beirut and his affirmation of Lebanese independence.

Western governments have been unable to reconcile the contradiction between their support for the peace process, their opposition to Hizbullah and its Iranian supporters, and the fact that Israel has been occupying part of Lebanon for more than a decade.

Lebanon's prime minister, Rafik al-Hariri, before leaving Paris on Monday where he sought sympathy and support, said: "If there were no [Israeli] occupation, there would be no reason for Hizbullah to exist."

But Mr Hariri was also quoted as saying Syria was ready to help restrain Hizbullah if Israel ceased its attacks.

In an interview with the French newspaper Le Monde, he said Israel and Hizbullah should revert to an unofficial 1993 agreement under which each side pledged to avoid hitting civilian targets. Asked whether he had asked Syria to use its influence on Hizbullah, Mr Hariri said: "We have asked the Syrian state . . . It will do so if Israel respects the accord."

Confusion over Britain's position arose when the Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, on a prearranged visit to Israel, gave strong backing to its attacks.

"I would not describe the Israeli reaction as disproportionate," Mr Portillo told reporters. "Israel is clearly facing a very substantial terrorist threat from Hizbullah, which is designed to undermine the peace process."

Mr Portillo was apparently relying on the text of a letter he delivered to Mr Peres from John Major, and which was reflected in a highly supportive statement issued by the Foreign Office last Friday, before the scale of the Israeli operation became clear.

Diplomats said Friday's statement had been dictated by Downing Street against Foreign Office opposition. It said: "When the peace process offers a non-violent way forward there can be absolutely no justification for Hizbullah actions."

One well-placed source said: "Substitute the name IRA for Hizbullah and you can see what happened."

Late on Monday the Foreign Office said: "We are disturbed by the increasing effects on civilians, despite Israel's efforts to avoid civilian loss of life, and by the growing humanitarian problems as large numbers of people flee."

Since Thursday last week, when Israeli bombers attacked Beirut for the first time in 13 years, Israeli gunfire and air strikes have killed at least 24 people and driven an estimated 400,000 from their homes.

Mr Peres, who faces an election in six weeks time, seemed close to anger on Monday when asked if the operation against the Lebanese had been ordered to boost his campaign. "In democracies you don't play with the lives of people to make any political advantages," he replied sharply.

Several commentators, however, have pointed out that Mr Peres, who has answered critics who accused him of a dangerous obsession with peacemaking at all costs, is gambling for high stakes with the military option.

Israel's steady diplomatic progress in the Middle East appears to have been unaffected by its continuing bombardment of south Lebanon. On Monday Tunisia became the fourth Arab state after Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco to establish diplomatic links with Israel.

Israel's closest allies in the region, Egypt and Jordan, have both expressed concern about the action in Lebanon but have stopped well short of formal protests.

Most Arab countries have made a muted response to the fighting, with the predictable exceptions of Iran and Iraq, both of which have issued condemnations.

Even Syria, which has about 35,000 soldiers in Lebanon and will inevitably play a leading role in any ceasefire, has refrained from an all-out attack on Israel's tactics.

Comment, page 12

Trading rocket fire

Key
Weekend events:
Israeli attacks
Hizbullah attacks
20 miles
Tripoli
Beirut
LEBANON
Sidon
Nabatiyeh
Tyre
Kiryat Shmona
ISRAEL
SYRIA
Katyusha rocket launcher being used by Hizbullah

How violence escalated

March 4: Hizbullah guerrillas kill four Israeli soldiers in the zone in south Lebanon occupied by Israel.
March 10: One Israeli soldier is killed in a Hizbullah bomb attack in the zone.
March 14: Five Israeli soldiers are wounded in a Hizbullah raid.
March 20: A Hizbullah suicide bomber kills one Israeli soldier near the border.
March 30: Israeli forces shell villages in south Lebanon, killing two civilians. Hizbullah fires Katyusha rockets into northern Israel.
April 8: A bomb kills a Lebanese boy in a guerrilla-held south Lebanon village.
April 9: Hizbullah fires Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, wounding 36.
April 10: Hizbullah shells the occupied zone, killing a soldier.
April 11 onwards: Israel launches multiple attacks.

Tories suffer humiliation at byelection

Rebecca Smithers

LABOUR swept to a sensational victory in the critical Staffordshire South-East byelection last week, wresting the seat from the Conservatives with a huge 22 per cent swing in a humiliating blow to John Major's Government.

The 13,762 majority astounded even Labour strategists. Their candidate Brian Jenkins, aged 53, boosted by a healthy turnout of 59.61 per cent — 43,525 voters — sent the Conservatives to their 35th consecutive byelection defeat.

Mr Major's Commons majority is now cut to a perilous one, increasing the likelihood of an autumn general election. Disgruntled Tory supporters withdrew their support in a fatal blow to the Conservatives, which left their candidate Jimmy James trailing with 12,393 votes to Labour's 26,155.

As the Conservatives moved swiftly to play down the significance of the loss for the Government's credibility, Labour triumphantly hailed it as an endorsement of positive policies to give Britain a fresh start, and a huge blow for the Tories in a classic Conservative seat. "This is a stunning result," said Labour leader Tony Blair in Washington.

The contest, which was triggered by the death last December of the Conservative whip Sir David Lightbown, had been described as the most important of this Parliament.

The Liberal Democrats trailed in a poor third, losing their deposit with 2,042 votes.

Comment, page 12

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Would Jesus ever have backed party of right?

I AM encouraged to hear Tony Blair seek to draw a link between his Christian faith and his political convictions (Blair enrages Conservatives by enlisting God on his side, April 14). I find the reactions by some Tory politicians to his comments to be curious indeed, to the point of disingenuousness.

Many Christians see the search for just a society as an essential dimension of the Christian faith. This often leads to views and stands on political issues that would normally be perceived as left-of-centre. Many thoughtful and serious Christians are drawn to the left-of-centre political parties because they view these groups as supporting social values similar to those advocated by the Christian faith.

Read any one of the four Gospels in the New Testament, then answer this question: "Could you imagine Jesus of Nazareth, as he was described in the Gospels, voting for a rightwing political party?"
(The Rev) Robert J Faser,
Claremont, Tasmania, Australia

NEARLY 15 years ago, a friend now climbing to dizzy heights in the Tory party was lamenting the broadly held belief that the only people with any ideals or altruism must be socialists and that to be virtuous and a Conservative were incompatible.

He extended his extremely able mind in the pursuit of a positive image to justify his allegiance to the Conservatives. All he came up with were notions of efficient management and business sense.

The latest howl of pain suggests that the Tories know they have failed, in the intervening years, to find anything better to cloak their philosophy and that they've blown the efficiency and managerial claims too.
S J Clarke,
Hayfield, Derbyshire

TONY BLAIR has got something right but did not go far enough. Christianity may be summed up as "succour the weak, the sick and the poor at the expense of the strong, the healthy and the rich". Post-1979 Conservatism puts it the opposite way round: "Support the strong, the healthy and the rich at the expense of the weak, the sick and the poor."
Tony Freke,
Newbury, Berkshire

I AM pleased that Tony Blair should attack Conservative self-interest as un-Christian. But will he apply his views to his own party? It contains several MPs and prospective MPs whose excessive wealth and luxurious lifestyles are inconsistent with both socialism and Christianity. What will our leader do about these Labour Pharisees?
Bob Holman,
Glasgow

Beijing attack unwarranted

KEITH RICHBURG'S attempt to vilify China (Washington Post, March 31) is wrong-headed and ill-intended. It does ask the questions which must be asked — how can China be convinced to follow acceptable trade rules, on, say, selling nuclear goods — but it imbeds these questions in a language that demonises China.

Richburg's arguments do not serve to point to any resolution of the new situation in Asia. Rather than propose the surrounding states dump their reserves into buying arms from the West, they should dump those funds into buying media and entertainment technology and knowledge from the West. Thus was won the Cold War I.

China's lack of democracy seems less tractable. But it has a context. The context is that the country holds, Mr Richburg notes, 22 per cent of the world's population. Keeping them alive, healthy, and eating well is a monumental task for a government.

Given our own inability to make large bureaucracies work, China seems to be doing quite well (Mr Richburg cites a 10 per cent economic growth rate). We should do what we can to assist, perhaps offering carrots rather than sticks, and not act in a way to reinforce racist images of the West.
Fred Ryan,
Editor, The Pontiac Journal,
Fort Coulonge, Quebec, Canada

Mandela's breath of fresh air

THANK YOU for giving us Frédéric Chambon's article (Le Monde, March 31). Nelson Mandela's approach to foreign policy comes through as a wonderful breath of fresh air in official international relations. The departments of foreign affairs of the Western democracies and the political commentators evidently do not like this approach. We are treated to phrases like: "The president's idiosyncratic diplomacy", "confusion and clumsiness".

They contrast strikingly with quotes from Mandela himself: "My line of conduct is to receive anyone who asks to see me, whether or not I share his ideas", and "They are my friends who were with us when we were alone".

We were all against apartheid, but Mandela must not admit that Castro and Gadafy were friends of the ANC during their long struggle, in case he risks ruffling the feathers of Helmut Kohl and Al Gore. He must not talk to representatives of Hamas or the Algerian Islamic Front as it brings protests from the Jewish community.

Perhaps President Mandela has not yet learned the niceties of diplomatic relationships. Or perhaps he sees current diplomatic practices as contributing to persistent hostile attitudes, terrorism, and war. He may see an advantage for the world community in dialogue with, rather than ostracism of, those who hold views we do not accept.
Alan Phillips, Joyce Phillips,
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Smoking out beef's dangers

SURELY if we accept that American states have the right to sue tobacco companies to pay medical bills for smokers (Washington Post, March 24), this opens the way to sue cattle feed producers over mad cow disease, chemical companies for widespread pollution of drinking water with agricultural and industrial chemicals, car manufacturers for the major air pollution of cities leading to a massive increase in asthma and other breathing problems, arms dealers over world-wide maiming and death caused to peasant farmers in many countries, plus innumerable other industries and governments for damaging people and the environment we all live in. At least smokers, unlike people affected by the above mentioned, do it to themselves.
Michael James,
Riogordo, Malaga, Spain

THE restoration of consumer confidence in British beef is an urgent priority. Martin Walker unwittingly suggests how this could be achieved (Baby come and light my cigarette, March 31) when he describes how a beleaguered American tobacco industry survived intact through the use of steamy classified ads that "take seasoned voyeurs to realms of experience that are beyond mere pornography". It would be a simple matter to replace the cigarette with a nice juicy beef steak and turn it into an irresistible erotic experience that would have the consumers stampeding to the supermarkets.

French consumers would swamp cross-Channel transport in their rush to enjoy the ultimate erotic experience of eating British beef. Meddling bureaucrats in Brussels would no doubt pass a law forbidding the sale of erotic steaks unless they were labelled "Parental guidance is recommended when feeding this product to children. This product can endanger your morals".
A J Lenton,
Balgowan, South Africa

Saudi opposition with a difference

DAVID HIRST spent too much time in the sun in Riyadh or perhaps he fell into bad company (Saudi opposition has much in common with regime, April 14). The Saudi opposition is fighting for an elected, accountable government in our country. Surely this is more than a shade different from the Saudi regime, which has never permitted any elections at any time in its history?

Of course, the basic "constitution" of Arabia would be Islamic; 99.99 per cent of our people are sincere Muslims. Why is that different from the German constitution, for example, which requires a commitment to democracy and against fascism from its electoral political parties?

Mr Hirst says that our rulers are "fundamentalist". Untrue. They are hypocrites who cloak themselves in their own mutilated version of Islam while violating each and every tenet of the Koran.

The Saudi opposition stands for an independent judiciary and a free press able to criticise it and the elected government. How different from the Riyadh visited by Mr Hirst.

Mr Hirst says that "all Saudi fundamentalists end up taking the Christian West as their models". When Mr Gandhi was asked what he thought of "Western civilisation" he replied: "Yes I think that would be a good idea." The Saudi regime exists only because of the West which, in return, turns a blind eye to Saudi corruption, hypocrisy and cruelty.
(Prof) Muhammad al-Mas'ari,
London

Briefly

THE CURRENT fighting in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, threatens a new disaster on top of an existing humanitarian emergency (Warlords rampage in Liberian capital, April 14). For the first time in five years war has entered the centre of Monrovia, turning what had been a safe haven for up to 1 million civilians into a nightmare of conflict and looting.

As our 1995 report suggested, the international powers should re-engage with Liberia, and the UN should take back the reins of diplomatic negotiation.
Mark Bowden,
Africa director,
Save The Children Fund, London

JOHN WARBURTON (April 14) complains that sexism is acceptable in the armed forces. This results not only in incidents such as the killing of Louise Jensen but also widespread homophobia.

Surely the *raison d'être* of armed forces — the furtherance of a state's ambitions (defensive or offensive) by young men armed both with guns and trained bellicosity — precludes such delicacy.

The day when the "representative" soldier is able to reason against homophobia or sexism may be the day he can reason against his own existence as a soldier.
Gray Charlton,
Sydney, Australia

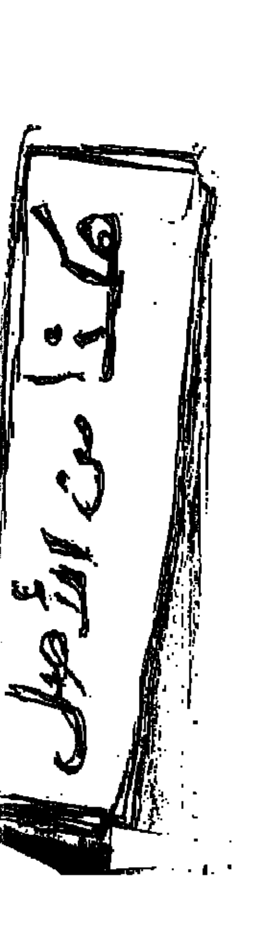
I AM surprised that police chiefs wish to extend the remit of Commander Grieve, head of the anti-terrorist branch, to include environmental activists (Police call for anti-terror squads to spy on greens, April 7). This story substantiates what we have consistently suspected: that the police are not impartial and are being used as security guards for the Department of Trade and other vested interests, such as animal exporters.
Hugo Charlton,
London

STEPHEN BATES'S concern for Europe's "grey future" is unwarranted (March 17). After a fall in fertility a period of relatively more aged must follow, but demographers are apt to forget that the dependent population also includes those too young to work and the unemployed. Both these groups are lessened by a low birth rate. If ever there is too much work for those of working age it will be a delightful new problem.

A lower birth rate means healthier babies and mothers. It's part of a better life for women, In this respect Europe sets a good example, which women in the rest of the world are following, although none too quickly.
(Dr) Guy Richards,
Vancouver, Canada

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Bosnia secures $1.8bn aid package

William Drozdiak in Brussels

DONOR nations fulfilled a critical dimension of the Dayton peace accords at the weekend by making new financial commitments to reach their goal of $1.8 billion for the reconstruction of Bosnia this year.

Representatives of 50 countries who attended a two-day conference hosted by the World Bank and the European Union pledged $1.23 billion while vowing to accelerate the flow of aid over the summer so that the Bosnian people will be able to reap tangible peace dividends by the time elections are held in early September.

After nearly four years of war, an enduring truce has been established under the Nato-led peacekeeping force. The United States and European nations have emphasised that greater attention must now by focused on rebuilding the Bosnian economy so that rival Serbs, Croats and Muslims will have a stake in sustaining peace after the peacekeepers leave at the end of the year.

But the Bosnian Serbs, heeding a boycott call by their leader, Radovan Karadzic, have refused to co-operate. They did not send any representatives to the conference, prompting the other delegations to declare that the Serbs would not share in any aid money until they show greater compliance with last year's Dayton agreement.

Carl Bildt, the former Swedish prime minister who is spearheading the reconstruction effort, warned that the Serbs ran the risk of depriving themselves of the peace dividend if they maintain their support for Mr Karadzic and the military commander, Ratko Mladic. Both have been indicted by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, and the US has said that under the terms of Dayton, they cannot long remain in office.

The World Bank and the EU estimate that Bosnia will require more than $5 billion in aid over the next three to four years to jump-start the recovery process from the devastation caused by Europe's bloodiest conflict since the second world war.

Per capital income has fallen to a quarter of its pre-war levels while industrial production is barely 10 per cent. One million refugees are scattered around Europe, while of those who stayed behind, three-quarters are unemployed and require humanitarian aid.

Between the dual entities set up in Bosnia by the Dayton peace accords, the Muslim-Croat federation is supposed to get $3.7 billion of the aid money while $1.4 billion is slated for the Bosnian Serb Republic.

"We all know we have a tough job to do," said the World Bank president, James Wolfensohn. "There is a sense of urgency, but we now have, I believe, a strong endorsement by the international community."

Mr Wolfensohn said most of the money would be devoted to urgent infrastructure tasks, such as rebuilding utilities, roads and farms, so that recovery can be sped up during the mild weather seasons that are more conducive to construction and planting.

He emphasised that public works should be used to create jobs for the 250,000 soldiers who are being demobilised. — *Washington Post*

Ian Traynor in Bonn adds: German policy towards Croatia and the regime of President Franjo Tudjman has come under strong attack from a German official who has just quit after almost two years trying to reintegrate Mostar, the partitioned capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Hans Koschnick, aged 67, the former mayor of the north German city of Bremen, returned home at the weekend after throwing in the towel because of lack of support from his own government and the wider international community for key aspects of his scheme to reunite the city.

Mostar was a focal point of the Muslim-Croat war of 1993, when Croat forces kicked virtually all the Muslims out of the western half at gunpoint and then laid siege to the eastern half for 10 months.



Riding shotgun . . . Gunmen in a car adorned with the Liberian flag drive past the US embassy in Monrovia as looting continues. Terrified Liberians have been left to fend for themselves among gangs of gunmen and looters as food and water run low. Aid workers have been forced to abandon the country: the UN and the Red Cross withdrew when looters overran their offices. ***Washington Post, page 15***

Pact sours Turkish ties

Chris Nuttall in Ankara

TURKEY'S relations with its Muslim neighbours and the Arab world were further soured last week when it announced that it had asked Iran to withdraw four of its diplomats for "activities incompatible with their status".

The foreign ministry said four Turkish diplomats, accused by Tehran of spying, would also be recalled. "Our diplomats carried out their duties in accordance with international law," the ministry's spokesman, Omer Akbel, said. "They have been accused unjustly."

The Iranian diplomats had been named as his contacts by an Islamic fundamentalist "hitman" arrested in Istanbul last month. He is wanted in connection with the assassination of Iranian dissidents and prominent Turkish secularists.

The tit-for-tat exchange follows a week of intense criticism of Turkey for signing a military co-operation deal with Israel.

The Arab League said it was "an act of aggression" and "a direct threat against Syria, Lebanon and Iraq as well as other Arab countries [which] shows the evil intentions of Israel and Turkey towards the Arabs".

Iranian newspapers commented: "We now have to worry about the presence of Israeli jet fighters on our doorsteps."

The Iraqi press said the deal would "encourage the Zionist entity to continue its policy of occupation and colonisation".

Syria reminded Turkey of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference resolution, supported by Ankara, stating that all OIC members should abstain from any form of military co-operation with Israel while it continued to occupy Arab land.

Libya said the accord gave the Israelis "a dangerous and vulgar breakthrough which will serve their plans to dominate the region".

● The worst fighting for a year between the Turkish army and Kurdish separatist guerrillas raged last week 10,000 feet up in the snow-covered mountains of south-eastern Turkey, with the army closing in on the rebels.

Special teams and commandos had carried out cross-border raids on bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq.

Thirty soldiers and around 100 members of the PKK were killed in five days of clashes, the authorities said. They are the heaviest casualties sustained by either side since the six-week incursion by 35,000 troops into northern Iraq launched last March to destroy PKK bases there.

Clinton seeks Korea talks

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton this week proposed four-party talks between North and South Korea, China and the United States to help promote a dialogue between the two Koreas, US officials said.

They said Mr Clinton would discuss the issue on Tuesday during his talks on Cheju island with the South Korean president, Kim Young-sam.

Mr Clinton said the US wanted to "do what we can to promote an ultimate reconciliation and an end to the conflict" on the Korean peninsula, after North Korea sent troops across the demilitarised zone between the Koreas, in violation of the armistice agreement.

President Clinton then flew to Tokyo to put the finishing touches to a new defence and security deal with Japan, which will preserve the strength of US forces in the country but lessen what one defence expert calls "the clumsy footprint of the American military". The deal presents the Americans as gracious guests. — ***Reuter***

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Bomb kills six in a 'political' attack on Imran Khan hospital

Gerald Bourke in Islamabad

IMRAN KHAN, the former great cricket all-rounder, condemned as the work of "a savage or an animal" the bombing of his cancer hospital in Lahore on Sunday, in which six people were killed and more than 30 injured.

The attack on the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust Hospital outside Lahore, capital of the Punjab province, is widely seen as an attempt to sabotage his budding political career.

The blast happened just after noon. The bomb, which was hidden under a sofa in the waiting area of the chemotherapy department, destroyed the crowded outpatients area and caused damage worth about $1 million.

"There were bodies everywhere," said Raja Chaudhry, the hospital director. "Doors were blown out and there was mangled furniture all over the place. It's a tragedy. How could anyone bomb a hospital?" He added that Sunday morning, when new patients are registered, was the busiest time of the week.

Mr Khan's hospital, open for little more than a year, was financed with donations from the public and dedicated to his mother, who died of cancer 10 years ago. Treatment is free for most patients who cannot afford to pay.

Mr Khan, who arrived at the hospital 45 minutes after the blast, said: "I would not like to name anyone. But whoever has carried out this cruel act has a very small mind." He said the bomb attack was aimed at frightening him into giving up his social welfare aims. "I want to tell those who want to scare me that I will move forward with greater determination."

On Monday Mr Khan threw down the gauntlet to Pakistan's prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, by declaring he would launch himself into politics later this month.

The legendary cricketer insisted at first he would lead a reform movement rather than a political party, but then seemed to change his mind. "Going into politics and starting a movement for reform are two different things. Or perhaps they are the same thing," Mr Khan, aged 43, said.

"I am more determined than ever that this country needs reform. This act [the bombing] shows that law and order is breaking down, that our institutions are breaking down."

Corruption was "unprecedented", he said, denouncing the "extravagant lifestyles" of Pakistan's ruling politicians. "We want reform in this country and I'm telling you I speak for the majority of the people," he added.

Asked whether his group, whose make-up remains obscure, would register as a party and contest elections, he said: "I'm not talking about votes at this time. I'm talking about a movement of people who are sick of the system."

Grassroots disaffection with Ms Bhutto's administration, which is halfway through its five-year term, has turned to exasperation. It has not delivered on promises to raise the living standards of the mostly poor voters who elected it, and is seen as dictatorial and repressive. Aggressive politicisation has undermined the credibility of the judiciary, bureaucracy, and police.

Most of Mr Khan's anger was directed at Ms Bhutto. Asked whether it was significant he had not received her when she visited the hospital after the blast, he replied: "It is very significant. I feel that her government, whether she knows it or not, is responsible for creating so many hurdles in the way of this hospital.

"I didn't want to be here when she was here. It would have been hypocritical of me to stand and smile for people who want to make political capital. I strongly condemn this. I think politicians should make sure they do not capitalise on the miseries of their own people."

Since retiring from cricket after leading his country to victory in the 1992 World Cup, Mr Khan has become a controversial figure. He embraced Islam and denounced Western values as shallow. It was a stance at odds with his playboy image as a sports celebrity, and provoked accusations of hypocrisy.

These became more strident last year when, after months of claiming he would like to marry a modest Muslim girl, it emerged he had secretly married Jemima Goldsmith, daughter of the billionaire businessman Sir James Goldsmith.

But his cancer hospital and a recent mass literacy programme have made him hugely popular with Pakistanis. So too has his growing criticism of the country's ruling élite.

The Week

FBI agents have recovered what they believe is a draft of the "Unabomber" manifesto from the remote Montana cabin of Theodore Kaczynski, the suspect arrested earlier this month.

PRESIDENT Clinton has nominated Mickey Kantor, the US trade representative, as his new commerce secretary to succeed Ron Brown, who died in a plane crash in Croatia earlier this month.

THE elderly parents of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the executed Nigerian writer and activist, are in hiding amid fears of a renewed crackdown by the military regime against dissidents.

THE US's biggest sexual harassment case, involving more than 300 women, is being brought against a Mitsubishi factory in Illinois by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

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A STUNNING collection of Trojan gold, seized by Soviet troops in Nazi Berlin in 1945, went on show in Moscow and immediately provoked demands from Germany for the return of the treasures.

ONE of the 11 hostages being held by separatist rebels in the Baliem Valley of Indonesia's Irian Jaya province is seriously ill while two others are in poor health, officials said.

AT LEAST 10 terminally ill people have moved to Australia's Northern Territory, where voluntary euthanasia legislation comes into effect in July.

AN INDONESIAN soldier ran wild at remote Timika airport in Irian Jaya, shooting dead 15 people — including at least 10 military colleagues.

GERMAN officials said blackmailers had threatened to poison with lethal snake venom food in stores across Europe unless they received diamonds worth $263 million.

A UN investigator, Maurice Glele-Ahanhanzo, said that France was being shaken by "a wave of xenophobia and racism", belying its image as the cradle of human rights.

FORMER US congressman Dan Rostenkowski pleaded guilty in a Washington federal court to two counts of mail fraud. He was sentenced to 17 months in prison and fined $100,000.

A SWEDISH court has fined a couple $660 for breaking the law by naming their son Brfxxccxxmnnpcccclllmmnprxxvclmnckssqlbb11116 — or Albin for short.

German fire may lead to charges

John Mullin

GERMAN prosecutors are considering criminal charges against maintenance workers after 16 people died at Düsseldorf in the country's worst airport fire, it emerged last week.

They will also consider action against the airport's management. City firefighters were not alerted until 30 minutes after the blaze was discovered.

Seven Germans, six French, two Italians and one Briton suffocated from poisonous fumes, some while trapped in a lift jammed between floors and others in an Air France waiting lounge. Most of the dead were returning from Easter breaks.

Prosecutor Rolf Chanteaux said: "We have opened an investigation for negligent arson and negligent killing." He said was targeting a wide group of people, not only a group of welders who were working above a flower shop in terminal A when they inadvertently melted a bitumen sealant.

The sealant dripped onto a false floor containing electrical wiring. The PVC-covered cables began to smoulder, giving off cyanide, chloride, carbon monoxide and possibly dioxin.

The fumes were funnelled down ventilation shafts to both the arrivals and departures areas and the railway station underneath the terminal. Thick black smoke filled the hall, which was packed with 2,500 travellers and staff, within 30 seconds.

As panicking staff and passengers rushed to find fire exits, the wrong evacuation message was then broadcast. A recorded announcement instructed passengers to go down to the arrivals floor — into the heart of Germany's worst airport blaze.

It took fire fighters five hours to bring the blaze under control.



Footprints of firefighters and fleeing passengers left on the soot-stained floor of Düsseldorf airport PHOTOGRAPH: EDGAR SCHOEPAL

China fails in show of democracy

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

CHINA'S first attempt to canvass Hong Kong public opinion ahead of the 1997 handover descended into pandemonium at the weekend, with the forcible eviction of invited student leaders, and a Chinese mandarin fleeing by taxi from scuffles at a luxury hotel.

The closed-door encounter between Chinese officials and invited representatives of Hong Kong's 6.4 million people ended amid chants of protest outside the five-star Grand Hyatt Hotel and black smoke billowing from a tyre set alight near the lobby entrance.

"This is not consultation. This is just a show. They want to pretend they are listening to the voice of Hong Kong," said Ivy Chan, a sociology student aged 22, who was one of two members of the Hong Kong Federation of Students to be ejected from the talks.

The fracas marred a meeting seen as an important test of China's readiness to tolerate dissent over plans for the territory after the departure, at midnight on June 30 next year, of Chris Patten, the 28th and last colonial governor.

"For Chinese officials I think one lesson is that this is a free and open society," Mr Patten said at the weekend. "We tolerate expressions of all sorts of opinions and it is a sign of strength and self-confidence if you try to embrace all shades of opinion."

During his recent visit to Britain, Mr Patten met John Major to discuss the fraught relations with China over the handover, and what British officials see as a crisis of confidence in the colony.

In an attempt to counter accusations of intolerance, Chinese officials had extended a surprise last-minute invitation to student leaders to discussions organised by the Preparatory Committee, a Beijing-appointed group of mainland and Hong Kong dignitaries. The gesture backfired, when security guards were called to toss out the students who had begun distributing leaflets. The two ejected students wore T-shirts with slogans attacking "bogus consultations" and China's plans to replace Hong Kong's elected legislature with a hand-picked "provisional" assembly.

"We spoke peacefully but this demonstrates what they mean by consultation," said Ms Chan, showing an arm bruised by security guards.

Chen Zuo'er, a Chinese official chairing the meeting, defended the students' expulsion. "Their behaviour made more than 70 other participants shocked and dissatisfied. To allow the consultation session to continue normally, we had no choice but to make them leave."

Anger over the scrapping of Hong Kong's elected legislature drew about 1,000 protesters at the weekend for a march from the central business district to the Happy Valley headquarters of the Xinhua News Agency, China's de facto embassy in the colony. Protesters stamped on bamboo bird cages.

"I'd rather be a small bird flying free than a canary in a cage singing only songs a master likes to hear," said Cheung Man-kwong, chairman of the Professional Teachers' Union, a group originally invited to air its views but later barred.

S African panel hears bitter truth

David Beresford in East London

THE name of Karl Andrew Webber did not feature prominently in the story of South Africa's liberation struggle but on Monday, as he sat with his mutilated arm held to his chest as the light filtered through stained-glass windows, there was a sense that he had carved out a small place for himself in history.

This was not so much as a victim of war — in his case, a random shooting in a bar — but as an emblem of reconciliation and peace.

The huge burgundy curtains on the stage in East London's city hall provided a fitting backdrop for the 17 members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as they set about uncovering the horrors of the apartheid era. From the moment Archbishop Desmond Tutu clambered up on to the stage to light a "candle of remembrance" it was apparent that the occasion was more one of dramatic performance than judicial inquiry.

"Arch" — as the Anglican primate likes to be known — announced a few minutes' delay to give national television time to cross to this coastal city. He then led his congregation in a Xhosa hymn before delivering a short homily. "We are charged to unearth the truth about our dark past, to lay the ghosts of that past so that they may not return to haunt us. That it may thereby contribute to the healing of a traumatised and wounded nation, for all of us in South Africa are wounded people."

They were familiar ghosts which were then paraded across the stage. The first was the victim of one of the best-known of South Africa's litany of deaths in detention — that of Mapetla Mohapi from the Eastern Cape, a friend and colleague of the murdered black consciousness leader, Steve Biko.

Mr Mohapi's widow, Nohle, recounted a tale often told since that night in 1976 when a police officer knocked at her door and said: "I am here to tell you that Mapetla hanged himself with a pair of jeans." She recalled how she had remonstrated with the officer: "He was a person with a vision for the future. He had plans for his life, for his family and his country as a whole. No, not Mapetla!"

Taken to identify his body, she was confronted by a black policeman who laughed. "They call themselves leaders and they kill themselves," he taunted her.

The past was abruptly brought home when Archbishop Tutu interrupted, announcing that a bomb warning had been received and the town hall had to be cleared.

Then it was time for details to be heard about one of the best-known incidents from the long list of "disappearances" during the liberation struggle in South Africa.

Three more widows took the stand to tell the saga of the "Pepco 3", leaders of a Port Elizabeth black civic group summoned to the local airport by a mysterious telephone call to meet a non-existent British consular official — and never seen again. As the women described their pain — with accounts of the years of struggle raising children without fathers, suffering detention and beatings themselves, and endlessly searching for the truth about what had happened to their loved ones — the commission began to run out of time.

The sad tale was gently brought to an end and two more witnesses stood down to bring Mr Webber to the stand. Burly, with closely cropped hair, he was the picture of that archetypal white South African, a rugby hooker.

An animal welfare inspector, Mr Webber had made the mistake of going to an East London bar for a drink on May Day in 1993 with a friend. The friend died with five others when a masked gunman walked into the bar and opened fire with an assault rifle. "My life changed overnight," Mr Webber said, describing his battle to survive with his mutilated arm, and to live on state aid of less than $150 a month.

A commission official — a black, middle-aged woman — sat next to Mr Webber with a comforting arm around his shoulder as he spoke.

A commissioner asked him what his attitude towards the truth inquiry was. "Hopefully, it is the start of a new beginning," he replied.

● The African National Congress wants Cyril Ramaphosa — who helped lead the party to power — to head a challenge to white minority domination of the economy, politicians and commentators said on Sunday. Mr Ramaphosa, the ANC's secretary-general, is leaving parliament to join New Africa Investment Limited, one of the few black conglomerates listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, President Mandela announced last week.

Blair and Bill make a perfect match



The US this week

Martin Walker

HE COULD almost have been the Stealth candidate. Tony Blair's first trip to the White House was barely a dot on the outer rim of the American radar screen in the days before his arrival, generating much less attention than the now-regular visits by Gerry Adams.

There had been a couple of approving profiles in those increasingly rare magazines which contain words rather than pictures, such as the New Yorker, the New Republic and the New Democrat. Political junkies knew his face from the C-Span channel's broadcast of House of Commons Question Time, and inside the State Department they already see him as the British prime minister-in-waiting.

Thanks to some careful advance work at the US Treasury and the Federal Reserve by Labour's economic spokesman, Gordon Brown, there was none of that rippling of alarm at Labour's reform plans. There were no off-the-record grumbles about unsound allies from the Pentagon or CIA, in the way that Neil Kinnock's White House call was soured in advance a decade ago.

Beyond these arcane levels, Tony Blair had yet to make much mark on the United States. Little was made of the attempts by the Conservative party to smear him in advance as just another pinko Labour peacenik. There were some nasty briefings to American reporters in London, and a hastily compiled pamphlet entitled "Tony Blair's Un-American Activities" were sent out to Republicans in Congress. Since Congress is still on its Easter vacation, few have noticed.

There is now a serious prospect that the rest of this decade could see two like-minded Oxford men, each one a lawyer and married to a lawyer, governing in tandem. They have a great deal in common, from a readiness to talk of politics in terms of religion to a deliberate rejection of every ideological tradition of the left. Each man has imposed his own loyalists and a uniform message upon the party, even as each steers instinctively for the centre ground. In the misty future, they could be very useful allies.

British politicians are valued the less in Washington these days, because their strategic utility in the cold war has not been replaced by a similar usefulness in its aftermath. Both the Bush and Clinton administrations have said it often enough, that Britain's value to Washington will rise and fall with Britain's influence in Europe. And the White House sees Blair jockeying their Trojan horse into Europe far more skilfully than the exhausted John Major.

But in the short term, each man has to win his election. And each one had reason to suspect that his cause might be just a bit tarnished by too much identification with the other. Beyond the obvious delicacy of being too closely identified with a scandal-prone Mr Clinton, the timing was acutely tricky for Blair. He could be fighting a British election next month, or six months after Clinton is either re-elected or turfed out of office by President Dole.

With the election looming, Clinton does not want too many reminders of the anti-war protests of his Oxford days, nor of Labour's radicalism in the 1980s. Nor does he want the voters to recall his 1992 campaign rhetoric about the merits of European social democracies in delivering health services and job training to their citizens. The irony in the Clinton-Blair relationship is that it may prosper best if it can be kept deliberately low-key in this election season.

So Blair was more than a touch nervous about the American visit. It was, of course, required of him, one of those rites of passage that opposition leaders in important democracies allied to America simply have to undergo. There is even a protocol for the business. In the White House, it is usually a brisk 20 minutes. If the current friendly head of government would be really cheesed off, as Mikhail Gorbachev was by the thought of Boris Yeltsin in the Oval Office, then the Yeltsin figure visits the vice-president or the national security adviser, and the president then does what is known as a "drop-by".

But Blair was entitled to rather more than 20 minutes. First, this was a Brit, and ever since the fuss over Northern Ireland, the Clintonites are very sensitive about the so-called special relationship. They may not be able to define it, but they know they have to mention it a lot when Brits are present. (One of Clinton's senior advisers told me that it reminded him of a school project his young daughters had to fulfil: carrying a raw egg around in a box for 24 hours to learn the need for responsibility in handling fragile objects.)

Second, there is meant to be an even deeper special relationship between the Labour and Democratic parties. Not many of the Clintonites know why, Labour having been out of power for so long, but they all accept this. There is historical truth here. It is not widely known that Britain's legendary trade union leader and foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, signed the Nato treaty and then affixed his seal with a signet ring given him by Samuel Gompers, the first president of the American Federation of Labour. "That'll teach them Rooshuns to tell me 'Workers of the World, Unite'," Bevin snorted.

The Clintonites recall the way John Major's Conservative party showed blatant partisanship in its help for George Bush in the 1992 presidential election. They also appreciate the way that Labour's pollster Philip Gould flew over to Little Rock in the last weeks of that campaign to help frustrate the knavish Tory tricks.

Clinton had met and liked Blair on his trip to Britain last November. He discovered that Blair was, like him, a lawyer, and was married, like him, to a clever, ambitious and highly political woman who was also a lawyer. The two men are interested in policy, and in the 40 minutes of their eventual discussions on Friday last week, the two fortysomething baby-boomers discussed job insecurity, training, and portable pensions. "It was a good old wonkathon," commented White House spokesman Mike McCurry, and such is the ease of translation between the two cultures that even the visiting British hacks knew this meant that two policy wonks had been happily discussing abstruse policy detail. Blair certainly impressed Clinton and laid the foundation for what could be an interesting relationship over the next five years if they each win their respective elections.



Blair played the Washington power circuit for laughs in a 36-hour visit that finally laid the ghost of joyless old Labour

But Blair had other tasks to fulfil. Above all, in a brief excursion to New York, he needed to reassure Wall Street that the owners of capital had not the slightest cause for concern when the British government next fell into Labour's hands.

Blair did so well that mega-financier George Soros, best known for making a billion dollars in 1992 from speculating against sterling in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism crisis, issued what amounted to an endorsement of the Labour party. This may not be altogether a comfort; Soros may see another billion-dollar opportunity looming in Labour's future.

As well as the financiers, Blair had to convey new Labour's fitness to rule to the Washington establishment, the political, media and social élites of the capital who tend to think as one, when they think at all. Their last memory of the British Labour party was some obscure Welshman coming to town to see President Reagan, and being mistaken for somebody else. (The story is true. Neil Kinnock turned up in the Oval Office with the veteran Denis Healey: the courteous old president rose from his desk, advanced on Healey, shook him warmly by the hand, and called him Neil. Reagan was ever after convinced that Kinnock was a communist, even though it was Healey who had briefly joined the party while at Oxford in the 1930s. He used to ask Mrs Thatcher how that "red-haired Red" was getting on.)

Determined to avoid any such embarrassments, Blair toned down the politics and played the Washington power circuit for laughs in a 36-hour visit which finally laid the ghost of the joyless dogmatism of the old Labour party. It was less Camelot than the Comedy Club. His great Washington coup was to get retired General Colin Powell and Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan to applaud Labour's thumping victory in the Staffordshire South-East byelection.

"John Major's government is now reduced to a majority of one — it's not something the ambassador can applaud, but the rest of you can," he told a dinner of Washington's great and the good at the British embassy. And he waited till they did.

It was one of the stream of jokes and self-deprecatory (but carefully rehearsed) flashes of wit that spiced his first American visit as Labour leader. The riskiest he got was a joke about Anglo-American misunderstandings. It was a grand and formal dinner party much like this, Blair began. American heiress and British MP Margot Asquith was getting cross with 1930s film star Jean Harlow who insisted on calling her Ma-Gott. Finally, her patience snapped.

"The T is silent," sniffed Asquith. "Unlike in your name."

The risk was less in the word "harlot" than in the long, long moment it took for the punch line to penetrate the genial fog of cocktails and wine. Still, Bianca Jagger liked it, and so did national security adviser Tony Lake. General Powell's wife looked startled.

Before the embassy dinner, Blair had First Lady Hillary Clinton in stitches at a private drinks party where he explained why Labour had been out of power for so long. "We had this slogan in the 1980s, which gives you some idea of the state we were in at that time — No Compromise with the Electorate," he offered. Hoots of laughter from the glitterati.

"After what seemed to me an abnormally long period of time, we realised that didn't work," he went on, at a party hosted by Sidney Blumenthal, who had just published a highly flattering profile of Blair in the New Yorker.

"Perhaps we should call him Sir Sidney from now on," Blair observed to the room of Democratic party and media heavyweights, which included New Yorker editor Tina Brown, who had flown down from New York for the occasion.

"When I was at Oxford, the smartest thing you could possible have was an invitation to one of Tina's parties — I never got one," Blair complained.

"We'll change that," she called out, but Blair was on to the next one-liner.

"I've just spent the day on Wall Street — so it's nice to be here among friends," he went on, getting a cheer from the last Democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tom Foley — the only veteran in a room of baby-boomers.

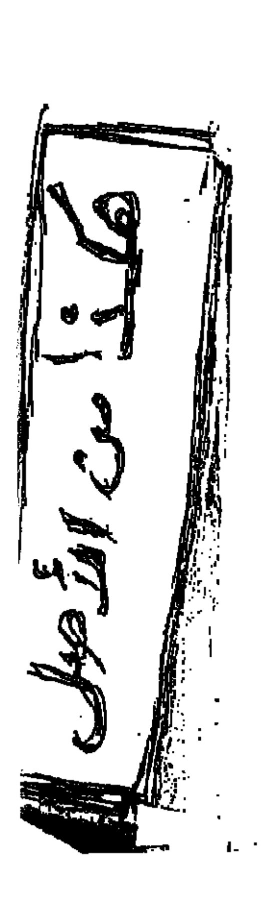
He talked politics with Clinton pollster Stan Greenberg. "The president has a 33-point lead among the over-sixties. It's historic. We've never seen margins like this."

He talked trade figures with Laura Tyson, head of the National Economic Council: "The change has come. US exports to Japan are growing six times as fast as Japan's exports to us."

And with Mrs Clinton, he tried to explain the defeat of the Australian Labor party and of the Spanish socialists, the eclipse of the left in France and Germany, and the way Labour in Britain and the Democrats in America had to keep the faith for "the values that brought us into politics are the same".

"We are the only bulwark against the increasingly extreme right wing that would tear down many of the most decent principles of any civilised society," he said, as Hillary nodded firmly over her orange juice. "They are increasingly nasty people, and they are increasingly people who preach a language of isolationism that I believe would be dangerous not just here in the United States but in Britain and Europe and the rest of the world".

The Democratic party had changed, and was now back in the White House. The Labour party had learned to change, but the job was unfinished. "I personally believe that we will probably have to change even further in terms of our outlook, and the messages that we have," Blair concluded. In effect, there is more change to come. For once, he did not sound as if he was joking.



Flawed democracy lumbers up for elections

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

THE film stars have been recruited, the catchiest Hindi pop songs have been ripped off, web sites have been colonised, and India's 74-year-old prime minister, P V Narasimha Rao, has been captured on video in dozens of benevolent poses.

When the final date for nominations closed earlier this month, the world's largest democracy lumbered into a general election campaign, offering its 590 million voters a bewildering political canvas from which to choose their 543 representatives in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament.

This is that brief moment when the hundreds of millions of poor and illiterate people, through sheer force of numbers, have an equal voice to the privileged few who generally dominate public life. And in this election more than ever before, politicians must pay attention to the demands of the dispossessed: lower-caste and Dalit (untouchable) Hindus.

"This is the way in which issues of social justice and equality are mobilised in our society," said Yogendra Yadav, co-ordinator of an ambitious programme to monitor the attitudes of 15,000 Indians to the elections, as well as general political issues. "There is so much assertion now for self-respect and dignity."

The elections come hard on the heels of an explosive corruption scandal, which has cost seven cabinet ministers their jobs and forced the retreat of several leading opposition figures.

Polling will be spread over three days between April 27 and May 7 in most of the country. Simultaneous elections for state assemblies are scheduled in West Bengal, which has had communist-led governments for nearly 20 years; the north-eastern tea garden region of Assam; Haryana, on the Delhi border; and the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Pondicherry.

Counting is likely to be over by the middle of May, before security forces move up to Kashmir for a final date with the ballot box on May 30.

Already, voters have got a glimpse of the shifting alliances that will dominate the campaign. After five years in which the uncharismatic Mr Rao has confounded critics by consolidating a minority Congress (I) government and taking it to its full five-year term, few observers expect the election to yield a clear result.

Whether a lead is taken by the Congress, which has dominated India for most of the years since independence, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has steamrolled to prominence by pandering to Hindu chauvinism, or the National Front-Left Front alliance, which claims to speak for the hundreds of millions of Indians oppressed by religion, caste and poverty, the outcome will rest on an ability to forge post-election alliances.

That is when the regional parties, whose appeal is mainly confined to single states, will be able to extract a price for their support; as will previously excluded constituencies such as Muslims, low-caste and Dalit Hindus, and Christians.

In such a fractured political landscape, even the six seats of Jammu and Kashmir, where separatist parties are expected to boycott the polls, carry weight beyond their numbers.

The machinations have already begun. A minor socialist party has joined hands with the BJP in northern India; Mr Rao last month sealed an alliance with J Jayalalitha, the authoritarian film star chief minister of Tamil Nadu, after two years of rancour. And a junior minister has defected to the BJP.

Yet the polls coincide with a general sense of drift in political life. For all but 15 or 20 per cent of the population, the mechanics of the new marketplace and the intricacies of the corruption scandals remain a mystery, argues Yogendra Yadav.

The *hawala* affair, in which more than 100 bureaucrats and politicians are alleged to have taken bribes from a black-market money changer, has made corruption the leading preoccupation of middle-class urban Indians. Opinion polls show more than 72 per cent of Indians believe that all politicians are crooked.

The elections offer a chance for voters to deliver their verdict on the English-speaking consumer culture that has engulfed cities since Mr Rao's government introduced market reforms. They also afford an opportunity for a final rejection of the Hindu chauvinism and caste hostility that so dominated the early part of the decade: the destruction of a 16th century mosque at Ayodhya in December 1992, the backlash against moves to expand affirmative action programmes to "backward" castes.

It is also a time to make parliament, where women have only 7 per cent of the seats and the number of senior citizens has crept up to 24.5 per cent, reflect more the diversity of Indian society.

None of these concerns have yet crystallised as election issues in the way that single concerns have for the past 20 years reduced general elections to plebiscites.

But for all the cynicism of the English-speaking élite, the inevitable rigging that will take place at some polling stations and the craven alliance-making that will follow the vote, for most Indians this is much, much more than an empty exercise. Every election since independence has seen a bigger turnout.

"There is a sense of hope. There is a sense of trust," Mr Yadav said. "There is still deep faith in democracy, a faith not articulated in the language of liberal democracy perhaps, but that is really the hope for the country."

● Preaching stability and renewal, Mr Rao launched the ruling party's election manifesto at the weekend. He said his government had proved it could deliver stability — the traditional claim of Congress administrations — and after five years of sweeping economic reforms it could also offer hope.

The Week In Britain James Lewis

Riot report backs police but leaves race relations strained

AN INQUIRY by the independent Police Complaints Authority into a two-day riot, which sparked a £1 million trail of damage in the Manningham area of Bradford last year, cleared the police of any misbehaviour or indiscipline. But the verdict was greeted with disappointment and some anger by young Asian groups in the area, and the Asian family at the centre of the brawl which led to the riot is to take civil proceedings against some officers.

Bradford, and neighbouring West Yorkshire towns, have a long history of harmonious race relations, and the violence, which started with unsubstantiated rumours of police heavy-handedness, worried both the indigenous population and the older members of the Asian community. Following the inquiry report, police and community leaders promised a "renewed commitment to building relationships".

There is, however, a serious drug problem in the area, which will continue to warrant a high level of policing. And there are associated problems of prostitution, affronting the principles of the older Muslim community, and high levels of unemployment among young Asians. Graffiti in support of Hamas, the Palestinian/Islamist group, has appeared in Bradford since the troubles, and there are dark threats about "worse to come" in the wake of the findings.

In a similar, but much smaller, outbreak of violence in Birmingham last week, more than 200 youths from a largely Asian community stoned buses and cars, looted shops and offices, and threw petrol bombs at police. The disturbances were sparked by a penalty notice for illegal parking.

But there were, once again, complaints of heavy-handed policing, frustration over crime, and disillusion caused by unemployment.

THE ACTIVITIES of an attempted extortionist, who sent 25 explosive devices with demands for money from Barclays Bank, were kept secret for 16 months by police who thought they could negotiate better without publicity. But the story broke when the extortionist, who uses the code-name Mardi Gras, appeared to lose patience and wrote to a newspaper issuing a seven-day ultimatum.

Many of the devices failed to explode, but one employee was slightly injured during the 16-month campaign. Although Mardi Gras claimed to be acting for "a small group of Barclays Bank victims", police thought it was a man acting alone.

The type of bomb and the vocabulary of his letters suggest that he has served at one time in one of the armed forces.

The union representing bank staff complained that Barclays had put workers' lives at risk by not informing them of the bomber's campaign.

THE Government accepted a proposal by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, that judges should, in passing sentence, be allowed to take account of the trauma suffered by crime victims. This is a radical departure for the British criminal justice system, which has allowed the victim's suffering to affect the sentence only in some offences, such as rape.

In the United States, victims of crime appear in court to tell the judge how the crime has affected their lives before sentence is passed. But Lord Taylor believes this goes too far, partly because it would expose the victim to hostile cross-examination. He suggests, instead, that a police assessment of a crime's impact on its victim should be put before the judge as part of the prosecution's case.

POLICE in Greater Manchester are investigating the death of an 80-year-old cancer patient, who was given an overdose of morphine by her son. He said he did it to put her out of her misery.

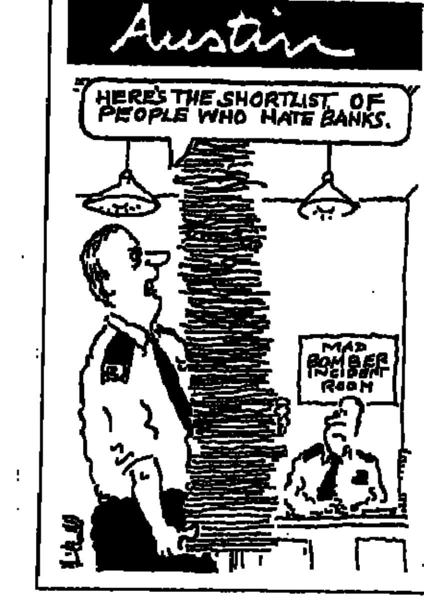
Derek Rowbottom, aged 44, said his mother, Alice, was unable to eat, drink or move without crying out in pain and he was "angry that doctors seemed unable to treat her, and unwilling to let her rest in peace". He noticed a booster button on her diamorphine pump, and pressed it until the syringe was empty. When nurses replaced it, he did the same again. A nurse spotted him doing it, and a coroner was called when Mrs Rowbottom died the next day.

Mr Rowbottom said he hoped the publicity surrounding the case would help lead to a change in the law to end the suffering of terminally-ill patients. "If the law prevents you from helping someone that you dearly love to rest in peace, it just wants changing," he said.

SENIOR Labour officials moved quickly at the weekend to silence Clare Short, the shadow transport secretary, when she announced: "I think in a fair tax system people like me would pay a bit more tax."

Her remarks went directly against Tony Blair's efforts to present Labour as a party of low taxation. In a clear sign of their waning confidence in Ms Short, party officials cancelled all media interviews when she continued to answer questions on the issue.

She in turn was critical of the way her comments had been seized upon by the media: "It's like a conspiracy to stop politicians talking honestly, so you get robots who just clone what they are told to say out of press releases."





Feet first . . . The snaking line of Hadrian's Wall near Housesteads Roman fort is suffering from too many tramping feet. Designed to cope with a limited number of legionaries' boots, the wall has collapsed in places. 'It is a lovely place but the wall has many other fascinating stretches,' said Jane Branton of the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

EU beef export ban remains

Guardian Reporters

THE European Union last week firmly resisted Government attempts to lift the blanket ban on British beef products, provoking calls from infuriated Conservative MPs for legal action against Brussels.

Hopes that the EU's veterinary officials would at least support a relaxation of the export restrictions were dashed when the European Commission made it clear there was insufficient support for the move.

Britain has been anxiously pressing for gelatine to be taken off the list of products which Britain can no longer export.

Last week a committee of EU scientific experts agreed that gelatine and tallow made from cows are safe provided that they have been treated at high temperatures.

A British official sought to put a brave face on the developments. He said that although the Government was disappointed, it was not surprised. "This is the sort of result we expected. We obviously have some way to go for enough member states to feel that they can support a change to the ban," he said.

EU officials predicted it would be weeks, if not months, before the prohibition ended.

Although many ministers have spoken of showing "solidarity" with Britain, privately officials from other EU countries are scathing about the Government's handling of the BSE crisis. The Government has also been criticised for not working closely enough with its EU partners and the commission.

An admission by the European Agriculture Commissioner, Franz Fischler, that he believed British beef was safe was welcomed by the Government as vindication of its view that the worldwide export ban was not justified.

But farmers and many MPs were astonished and angry at the continuing ban in the face of Mr Fischler's comments that there was no public health risk despite mad cow disease.

"I wouldn't hesitate to eat beef in England. I see no medical reason not to," he said.

Sir Michael Spicer, a leading Tory Eurosceptic, claimed: "I think it is now clear that the ban, and the Commission reaction to the British beef crisis, has been largely political and not based on health questions.

"This is a political move on the part of other European countries who have competitive interests and are out to protect their industry against a very successful British beef industry," he said.

Meanwhile, the fraud unit of the EU agriculture directorate has begun an investigation into allegations that rules imposed by the EU to prevent the spread of BSE and other animal diseases to the Continent have been routinely ignored by exporters with the knowledge of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Thousands of live calves and millions of sheep have been exported illegally every year without the disinfection procedures and veterinary checks which the EU believed were being carried out.

● The families of eight people aged between 20 and 34 who died from CJD after taking a human growth hormone as children are taking the Government to the High Court.

They accuse the Government of negligence in not taking account of the risk of CJD in manufacturing the hormone, which was used between 1959 and 1985 to boost the stature of short children.

Manchester begs for rain as joke wears thin

THE WORLD laughed when North West Water announced in February that Manchester, a byword for dampness, had become one of the driest cities in Europe, *writes David Ward*.

But the crisis continues. "This is the severest drought in living memory," Harry Croft, North West Water's operations director, said. The weather experts claimed it was the worst in 200 years.

In 10 months of drought, Manchester had less rain than Madrid, Rome or Athens. While Malta had endured almost 1½ times its average rainfall, Manchester had only half the rain it usually enjoyed.

There has been next to no rain so far in April and the region now needs twice its average rainfall if water supplies are to return to normal.

Hosepipe bans remain in force and owners of swimming pools and extravagant sprinklers have been asked to register with the water company in a move that could lead to the installation of meters.

Reservoirs are two-thirds full on average — but the figure conceals wide variations. Those in the traditionally soggy Lake District are 77 per cent full (99 per cent this time last year). But the reservoirs on the western flanks of the Pennines are only 44 per cent full — the Longdendale series above Glossop is barely half full, and the figure for Oldham is a frightening 19 per cent. (It slumped to 6 per cent in February.)

The company accepts that it loses about 35 per cent of its water through leaks and has just introduced a leak-line freephone number on which the public can report leaks.

Meanwhile, the word "sorry" is kicking off Yorkshire Water's preparations for this summer's expected drought in a blitz of newspaper, radio and TV advertisements launched.

Company director Tracey Flanders precedes her public appeal for prudence with a direct apology for the problems and confusion of last year.

Single currency boost for Chancellor

John Palmer in Verona and Ian Traynor in Bonn

BRITAIN'S European Union partners have indicated they will not exclude Britain from a single European currency in 1999, even if it stays out of a revamped European exchange rate mechanism.

A strict reading of the Maastricht treaty implies Britain must be an ERM member for two years before taking part in monetary union.

Britain left the ERM in 1992. But the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, who supports membership of a single currency, said after EU finance ministers met at the weekend: "It would be quite absurd to exclude a country which satisfied convergence criteria and exchange rate stability on the basis that it hadn't had a formal two years' membership of an ERM."

He added that ministers had indicated that the two-year rule will not be invoked where a country has proved it has run a stable currency exchange rate.

But the Government came under renewed pressure to accept tough new disciplines to guarantee Britain's economic convergence with the rest of the EU, even if it stays outside both the single European currency and a new ERM.

European finance ministers and central bank governors held two days of detailed discussions in Verona about how the pound might be linked with the euro — the future single currency — even if it is not part of either monetary union or the ERM.

Mr Clarke was told by several ministers that the pound should rejoin the ERM in the interests of monetary stability in Britain and throughout Europe after the single currency is launched in 1999. Britain and Italy were ejected from the ERM in 1992 and the Government is loath to rejoin.

Proponents of a new ERM want to stop those outside from undermining the system through making national devaluations.

The meeting was told that there should in future be more detailed scrutiny of national economic and monetary policies for all members.

Hans Tietmeyer, chief of Germany's powerful Bundesbank, has made it clear that he wants the governor of a future European central bank to have powers not only over those joining a single currency but also over those EU currencies left outside, to avert the risk of "competitive devaluation". On no account, however, do the Germans want a European central bank to intervene to defend EU currencies outside EMU against market onslaughts.

● Billionaire financier Sir James Goldsmith last week pledged to press ahead with his £20 million campaign to put up 600 Referendum Party candidates at the election.

Sir James's comments came as a response to the Government's announcement that it will make a manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on a single currency.

Sir James said that the Government's decision was "an act of appeasement within the Cabinet to try and keep it stable". He said the proposed referendum was dependent on the Conservatives being re-elected — "a somewhat obscure idea at this moment" — and that it only lasted for one Parliament.

His candidates will stand in seats where the Conservative candidates oppose a referendum. He confirmed that after a referendum his party would disappear and that he had no other political ambitions.

Abortions rise after Pill scare

Chris Mihill and Sue Quinn

THE NUMBER of abortions rose by nearly 10 per cent following last year's scare over the safety of certain contraceptive pills, according to the British Pregnancy Advisory Service.

The increase is believed to have been the result of women being driven to stop taking oral contraceptives out of fear for their health.

The BPAS said that among its 28 clinics there had been an extra 823 abortions over the number normally expected in the three-month period from December last year to February this year.

The charity, which performs almost 18 per cent of legal abortions in England and Wales, says the majority of the 9.5 per cent increase can be attributed to the Pill scare last October, when the Government said seven of the most popular brands could cause an increased risk of blood clots.

The BPAS survey was carried out soon after the warning that 1.5 million women taking the "third generation" Pill were twice as likely to suffer from deep vein thrombosis as those on other types of oral contraceptives.

Despite women being advised to continue with their Pill until they had seen a doctor, the BPAS found that 41 per cent of users stopped immediately and 61 per cent did not finish their course.

The findings have prompted renewed criticism of the Government's handling of the Pill scare. In its report the BPAS says information should have been available to women as the main emphasis of the announcement. Attention could have been focused on the risks associated with unwanted pregnancies, which are far greater than the risks from thrombosis associated with the types of Pill involved.

"There seems to have been a lost opportunity in this announcement," a BPAS spokeswoman said. "Women made immediate decisions and as a result there is an increase in unplanned pregnancies. With more comprehensive information and a more educated means of communication, women are better prepared to make an informed decision.

"Perhaps this would have ensured that women were more able to determine the overall risk factors against benefits, and take less immediate and drastic action such as stopping a means of contraception."

Prosecutor urges Bridgewater rethink

Paul Foot and Angella Johnson

THE lawyer who prosecuted the four men convicted in 1979 of the murder of newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater has written to the Home Secretary insisting the case should be reopened.

Michael Chance expressed concern to Michael Howard over a "disturbing error" in the conduct of the prosecution — the non-disclosure at the trial of two unidentified fingerprints on the frame of the murdered boy's bicycle.

Mr Chance, who was responsible for the prosecution of James Robinson, Patrick Molloy and the cousins Vincent and Michael Hickey at their trial at Stafford in 1979, wrote to the Home Secretary on December 14 last year, after Mr Howard announced that he was "not minded" to send the case back to the Court of Appeal.

He wrote: "Carl Bridgewater disturbed burglars whilst delivering a newspaper at Yew Tree Farm. They shot him before making good their escape. The boy most probably left his bicycle by the farmhouse door whilst delivering the paper. The cycle was subsequently recovered from a nearby pigsty. The likelihood is that one of those involved in the burglary and the murder removed it from his path whilst making off.

"The fingerprints were found on the cycle frame. There was initial optimism the fingerprints would lead to the identification of the offenders. In the event, the fingerprints differ from those of all four convicted men."

Though the bicycle featured prominently in the case — it was even deposited in the jury room — the unidentified prints on it were not disclosed to the defence at the trial or at the appeal in 1988.

In a reply on January 9, Tim Kirkhope, junior Home Office minister, sought to reassure Mr Chance. There were, he said, "no other unidentified fingerprints" found at the farm. "This gives good grounds for believing that the intruders wore gloves. There was no reason to connect marks found on Carl's bike with the crime."

Meanwhile, a second juror from the trial is backing the campaign to get them freed.

Lucinda Graham, who was 19 at the time of the trial, said she had doubts about the case from the start.

"We couldn't give an 8-4 or a 10-2 — it had to be unanimous. I believe they're innocent. I want to help in some small way if I can."

In 1994 Tim O'Malley, the jury foreman, was the first juror to state publicly that he believed the men to be innocent.

Pay for probation officers to be 'performance-related'

Alan Travis

PROBATION officers are to be put on performance-related pay linked to whether their criminal "clients" are convicted again, under proposals from Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

The scheme linking part of their pay to whether the criminals they supervise go straight is expected to come into force this summer. It will mean that for some probation officers crime won't pay.

Under the scheme, probation officers supervising offenders who breach their court orders or get recalled to prison while they are out on licence can expect only small pay rises or no increase at all.

Labour's home affairs spokesman, Alun Michael, said he was alarmed by the idea: "The supervision of serious offenders is too serious to be left to a Home Secretary who creates disaster out of everything he touches," he said.

The Home Office is to put forward the idea in this year's pay negotiations. An unpublished Home Office document outlining the scheme follows repeated complaints by ministers that community penalties supervised by the service need to be more demanding.

It says economies must be sought in all aspects of the service's operation. "It remains government policy that pay levels in the public sector should be linked to achievement so that those who contribute the most to the success of an organisation receive a greater share of the money available, while those who contribute less, get less."

It makes it clear that Mr Howard has expressed clear backing for the scheme.

Among the indicators to determine individual pay are: reconviction rates for those subject to community service orders; the numbers of community orders completed without breach or further re-offending; the number of licences completed without breach leading to recall to prison; and the number of welfare reports completed within 10 days.

Probation officers have greeted the plan with scepticism. Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "This will be impossible to administer . . . It will be impractical and unworkable. It will outrage staff.

"It will encourage probation staff to recommend for supervision under community orders only those offenders who will not re-offend. Those who have been to prison will be less likely to be recommended by the probation service for a community service order in case they offend again."

The performance-related pay plan is linked to a wider package of reforms of community sentences being put forward by Mr Howard, including the expansion of electronic tagging trials.



Goodbye to all that . . . A prisoner takes out overnight slop buckets for the last time in Armley prison in Leeds last week. Individual cells now have either a toilet and washbasin, or electronic unlocking which allows inmates to leave their cells at night under 'computer-controlled conditions'

Oxford loses Flick money

Alex Bellos

GERT-RUDOLF FLICK, the millionaire grandson of a Nazi war criminal, has pulled out of funding a professorship at Balliol College, Oxford, after a long controversy about whether or not his money was tainted.

Balliol College had given its backing to the Flick chair in European thought, which was to be funded by a £350,000 donation, but the decision was criticised by dons who believed it was unethical to accept money from the grandson of a man convicted at the Nuremburg war crimes tribunal.

Dr Flick said at the weekend that he wanted his name removed from the chair and his endowment money returned. He said: "I would like to thank the university wholeheartedly for its unwavering support."

The Flick chair had caused anguish within Balliol and the Jewish community about the ethics of fund-raising at a time when colleges are increasingly dependent on private funding. Several prominent Jews, such as Lord Weidenfeld, said a line had to be drawn under Germany's Nazi past and that Balliol should accept the money.

Dr Flick's grandfather built up one of Germany's richest industrial empires. He was an adviser to Heinrich Himmler and allegedly used 40,000 slave labourers. After the war, he was sentenced to seven years' jail, and was freed after three years, in 1950.

Ecstasy 'as safe as aspirin'

Vivek Chaudhary

DOCTORS and drugs relief agencies rallied last week to the defence of a senior Scottish social worker who claimed that Ecstasy was "relatively safe," and that there was more chance of dying from taking an aspirin.

Mary Hartnoll, Scotland's most senior social worker, made her comments in a private memorandum to John Anderson, Glasgow city council's chief executive.

She was responding to the Glasgow Licensing Board's public campaign against drug taking in bars and clubs across the city and its hard-line approach which has ruled out the setting up of "chill-out" areas on the grounds that this could be seen to condone drug taking.

Ms Hartnoll said the "enforcement" approach to drug misuse in clubs was legitimate, but would not prevent drug misuse on its own.

She writes in the memo: "The irony is that Ecstasy, for example, is a relatively safe drug — risk of death has been calculated as one in 6.8million (the risk of dying from an ordinary dose of aspirin is very much greater) — and young people tend to know this. For every highly publicised death, those who use the drug regularly balance their experience of their own, and friends' experience of frequent, safe and enjoyable usage. The 'fear' message conveys very little effect in their circumstances."

John Marks, a consultant psychiatrist, claimed Ms Hartnoll's comments were "responsible, intelligent, and above all, true in contrast to all the other things that are said.

"There were no deaths from Ecstasy when it was legally available. The evidence indicates there are no deaths from ecstasy when there are legal, pure supplies available and there is sensible health care advice to go along with it."

Ms Hartnoll's comments, however, were branded "totally irresponsible" by the father of teenager Leah Betts, who died last year after taking an Ecstasy tablet. Paul Betts said: "To come from such a prominent person, it's absolutely stupid."

In Brief

DOCTORS in Scotland who withdraw treatment from permanently vegetative patients with the court's permission will not face prosecution for killing them, the Lord Advocate said. Meanwhile, a musician who came out last month from two years in an apparent permanent vegetative state to tell detectives he had been attacked on a train, has admitted his account was untrue.

LISA LEESON, wife of the disgraced former Barings trader Nick Leeson, has landed a job as a flight attendant with Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic airline.

THE Government's plans to legislate to enforce smoking controls in buildings open to the public have been abandoned, even though ministers agreed a voluntary approach has failed.

BRITAIN'S first surrogate grandmother, Edith Jones, aged 51, has been implanted with two embryos grown from eggs from her daughter and fertilised by sperm from her son-in-law.

POLICE said that Loyalist paramilitaries masterminded Northern Ireland's biggest armed robbery, which netted about £1 million, although members of the armed gang claimed to be from the IRA.

GRADUATES are starting their working lives with ever bigger debts, according to a Barclays Bank survey, which found a rise of 31 per cent on 1994's average £2,230 graduate debt.

REPORTS to the police of racial attacks and intimidation are rising at a rate of 8 per cent a year, according to Home Office figures.

CUNARD officials met Egyptian authorities to sort out a £15 million compensation claim for damage to a coral reef in the Red Sea, which Egypt claims was caused by the Royal Viking Sun cruise liner when it ran aground on April 6.

A JOURNALIST refused to comply with a Department of Trade and Industry demand to return a leaked copy of a confidential report from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

CHARLES VINCENT, a City dealer who earned £15 million a year, has resigned from the metals trading company he founded, for "lifestyle reasons".

SZYMON SERAFINOWICZ, aged 85, who moved to England in 1947, became the first person in Britain to face trial on war crimes charges when he was committed at the Old Bailey on three counts of murdering an unknown Jew in Bielarus while it was under Nazi occupation in 1941-42.

Young becoming 'dunces of Europe'

John Carvel

BRITISH youngsters are on the way to becoming the dunces of Europe, local authority leaders warned last week after hearing evidence from the careers service that the proportion of 16-year-olds dropping out of education rose last year for the first time in recent record.

A survey of 600,000 young people ending compulsory education after passing their sixteenth birthdays showed that only 67.6 per cent stayed on full-time courses at school or college, compared with 68.1 per cent in 1994.

This is the first drop since the careers service started collecting comprehensive data seven years ago, raising doubts that the Government's targets for producing a more qualified workforce by 2000 can be achieved.

The percentage staying on in any form of education — including part-time courses, youth training programmes and employment — also fell for the first time, from 83 per cent to 81 per cent.

"There is some evidence . . . that a small but growing number of young people are either opting out of the recognised education, training and employment market, or at least are deferring entry to it," said the report by the UK Heads of Careers Services, published by the local authority associations.

Graham Lane, education chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said the figures were the most disturbing educational indicators for many years.

"They show we are heading to become the dunces of Europe. Britain has one of the poorest records in the EU for young people staying in education after 16 and going on to gain appropriate qualifications. As long as the staying-on rates were rising, we could at least claim to be making some improvements, but now even that glimmer of hope has been extinguished."

Young people were badly served by recent changes in post-16 education which led to unhealthy competition between sixth forms and "privatised" colleges of further education. Sir Ron Dearing's recent reform proposals did not go far enough to encourage staying on by integrating academic and vocational qualifications, he said.

The survey showed big regional variations in the drop-out rate. In northern England 57 per cent continued in education, 19 per cent had youth training, 6 per cent got a job, 10 per cent were unemployed and 8 per cent were untraceable. In south-east England 75 per cent continued in education, 5.5 per cent had youth training, 8 per cent had a job, 5 per cent were unemployed and 6.5 per cent were untraceable.

The lowest staying-on rate was 46 per cent in Manchester, which compared with 85 per cent who stayed in education in the London boroughs of Barnet and Harrow.

The survey found:

- ❑ a decline in the percentage of young people entering youth training;
- ❑ an increase in the percentage unemployed or not available for work;
- ❑ an increase in numbers of 16-year-olds, which tended to mask the reduction in the percentage staying in education;
- ❑ greater competition between colleges and schools with "increasingly aggressive marketing techniques" being used to attract students.

School Leavers Destinations 1995: ACC Publications, £6

Labour woos executives into schools

John Carvel and Donald MacLeod

AN EASY route for middle-aged executives to switch into a second career in teaching was promised last week by David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, as part of a 10-point Labour programme for raising the status of the profession.

"We will support mature students who wish to enter teaching . . . with an emphasis on those who have been in industry, commerce, finance and the media," he told the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers conference in Glasgow.

Labour sources said the aim was to inject experience of the wider world into the classroom by bringing in entrants in their late 40s and 50s who may be considering early retirement, but who could give 10 or 15 years of service to teaching.

But headteachers responded that Labour's plans for a "dad's army" of middle-aged executives would do little to solve a looming shortage in the classroom.

A row also erupted over the cost of proposals from David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, to give staff a term's sabbatical leave after 15 years' service, as part of a 10-point programme to raise the status of the profession.

The conference gave Mr Blunkett's ideas a warm reception. But he was attacked by James Paice, the education minister, who said the scheme would cost £5 million if the estimated 240,000 teachers with 15 years' experience took advantage of it. "Is this money to come from school budgets or is this another example of Labour not thinking things through?'

Sabbatical leave of between a term and a year to allow teachers to refresh their knowledge or work in industry would have to be phased in and could be met from existing training funds, Mr Blunkett said. Labour said part of the cost would be met from business sponsorship.

John Dunford, president of the Secondary Heads' Association, said it would be better to invest in young people with a full teaching career before them. "This will not solve the huge teacher shortage that is coming in the next two or three years. We have to create a teaching force that encourages the best young graduates to come into teaching."

Grapes of Wrath have bitter taste

HAVE they all been struck dumb? For five days as Israel intensified its assault on Lebanon the only sound in the White House, the UN Secretary-General's office and Downing Street has been the diplomatic shuffling of awkward feet. Keeping quiet may indeed be preferable to Monday's crude apologia for Israel delivered by the British Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo (from which the Foreign Office appears, later, to have muttered its dissent). International leaders have a duty to express themselves on the issues of principle raised by events of this devastating scale. Their silence is as shameful as Israel's own savage and unwise response to Hizbullah's provocation.

This is not, unfortunately, the first time that Israel has launched an overkill operation against the people of Lebanon. The real target is always elsewhere — against Damascus for its toleration of Hizbullah or, on this occasion, to disarm rightwing Likud opposition in the run-up to the Israeli elections. On the last occasion, in July 1993, Yitzhak Rabin vowed to make southern Lebanon "uninhabitable" and to silence Hizbullah once and for all. Then as now, civilians were killed, several hundred thousand fled in miserable panic — and Hizbullah lived to launch its not very effective rockets another year. But there was one important difference: some Western leaders and governments did actually open their mouths. Britain said then that Israel's "deliberate attempt to displace a large part of the civilian population [of Lebanon] cannot be justified". (Monday's belated expression of "concern" from the Foreign Office at the "humanitarian problems" of the refugees is much weaker and carefully avoids criticising Israel.) Last time too, the Clinton administration blamed Israel in the same breath as Hizbullah, saying that "military activities directed against all civilians should stop". And Boutros Boutros-Ghali said that it was "deplorable" for any government to adopt policies that would lead to more displaced persons. If all this could be said three years ago, why not now?

Israel's action is to be condemned on two clear grounds of principle. First, it goes far beyond the internationally recognised principle of "proportionate response". The right to self-defence must be exercised with reasonable restraint. Quite apart from the human suffering involved, the scale of Israeli "reprisal" against Lebanon is so disproportionate as to constitute aggression in its own right. Second, the action breaches international agreements on the protection of civilian populations in time of war. (It is mere sophistry to say this is not a war.) No rational person could regard 400,000 south Lebanese as collectively responsible for the activities of some 500 Hizbullah activists in a few areas, most of them close to the Israeli border. Indeed Israel itself does not pretend that they are: Shimon Peres and his colleagues are quite open about seeking to punish the Lebanese government by terrorising its people. The whole of Lebanon south of the Litani river has been declared a free-fire zone where, according to the Israeli army, "anyone remaining is solely responsible for endangering his life". This again is in express violation of the Geneva conventions.

Mr Peres's political difficulties in the wake of the Hamas bombings have been compounded by Hizbullah. Some response was to be expected but this protracted campaign has an air of desperation. Naming it Operation Grapes of Wrath evokes the verses in Deuteronomy which vow that "their day of disaster is near". Hizbullah will survive: it is the confidence needed for the peace process that has been dealt another disastrous blow.

Hanging on by a single vote

IN spite of noises off, it is hard to remember a more steadily lopsided political situation than that now in Britain. Labour's lead in the polls barely changes from month to month. The Staffordshire byelection confirms the conclusion. May's local elections are likely to repeat it. The financial and diplomatic worlds stand by for a change of government, while the civil service prepares itself too. Everyone treats Tony Blair as Prime Minister-presumptive. Britain is ready for a general election and a Labour government.

But Britain is not going to get either for at least a year, not without something very unexpected. As MPs return to Westminster, the atmosphere may appear tense, thanks to that one-vote majority. But time and even the parliamentary arithmetic nevertheless remain on the Conservatives' side. Even if they lost a vote on rail privatisation this week (unlikely because of Unionist support) or on divorce next week (unlikely because of compromises), they would probably survive a confidence motion. After July, Parliament will not sit before October. After October, everything will give way to the Budget and, since nobody wants a winter election, the options are actually fairly limited.

Only three things are likely to change that — further byelection losses, a defeat on a confidence vote, or a decision by John Major to go early — and each of them is only a remote possibility. Byelection losses require byelections, and there are none in the offing. For the Government to lose a confidence vote, it must lose the support both of some backbenchers and of the Ulster Unionists. Weekend stories that two Conservative MPs are preparing to provide the first of these changes should be treated with great caution, since they contain no supporting evidence that the turkeys in question have decided to vote for Christmas. In any case, Ulster votes could probably be relied upon in the end.

That leaves the gambler's throw of an early election called by Mr Major himself. For that to happen, the Conservatives would have to feel confident that the polls were surging strongly their way and that it would not last into spring 1997. But where is the evidence for that? Not in Staffordshire South-East and probably not in the local elections either. Perhaps a few more wobbly suggestions about increased taxes on middle income Britain from shadow ministers — following Clare Short's on Sunday — might stimulate the surge. But, here again, there is no evidence yet that it would. Mr Major has shown that he can be a gambler, but he has never gambled without calculating the odds first.

The simple reality is that Britain is paying the price for its five-year electoral cycle. No democratic country in the Western world has to wait as long between elections, and perhaps that's a British opt-out that should be abandoned. But when a British government goes off the rails early in a parliament — as the Major government did over Europe and the exchange rate within six months of its re-election in 1992 — and still retains its majority, the probability is of a long wait. Everything should be done to hasten the date of the general election, but it still looks like 1997, even now.

Lesson from the Norman conqueror

GREG NORMAN had never won the US Masters golf championship, but this year he led it from the start. At the end of day one, he was two strokes up on the field. By the second evening his lead was four. After day three he was six strokes clear of his rivals. Heading out on to the course for the last time on Sunday, Norman looked a cert to win.

Then it began to fall apart. Agonisingly, Norman's lead flaked away at every hole. As error followed error, the certainty of a Norman victory dissolved. On hole 66 of the 72-hole tournament, Nick Faldo at last overtook him, playing the way that has brought him so much success so often. At the end, the man who had seemed the certain winner finished five shots behind. It was one of the most shattering collapses in recent sporting history.

Did Tony Blair watch the coverage of the golf from Augusta? If so, he will have seen Norman acting out the Labour party's worst nightmare. Nothing is worse than to build and sustain a lead and then throw it away to your greatest rival when within sight of a famous victory. It is especially galling when over the years that rival has won almost as often as you have lost. For in the same way that Norman's squandered dominance embodied Labour's darkest fear, so Faldo's ice-cool discipline under pressure epitomised the Conservative party's one remaining winning fantasy.

Golf is a game for strong temperaments. The temptation, sitting at the top of the leader board, is to play safe, eliminate errors, hit sensible irons down the middle of the fairway and lay up your putts. But that means abandoning the daring that won you the lead in the first place. The golfer who combined Norman's flair and Faldo's cool would be unstoppable. And so would the politician.

Middle East's futile dialogue of death

Martin Woollacott

WHATEVER their mother tongue, the peoples of the Middle East are all fluent in the region's second language, that of violence. The messages they exchange are literally written in blood. They are almost always ineffective. And they have increasingly become messages addressed as much to one's own side as to the enemy. The stereotypical Israeli situation is one in which you kill people in order to send a message to another government that it should use violence against the people who are using violence against you.

You do this without real expectation that it will work but in order to prove to your own people that you are doing what you can. The typical Syrian situation is one in which you permit your proxies to kill people in order to send a message that life will continue to be painful for another government until it gives you a settlement on your terms, which, however, are less important in themselves than as a signal of toughness to your own people. The typical situation of what are called terrorist movements is that you kill people in order to prove to your own people, to the Israeli government, and to Arab governments, that you are a power to be reckoned with.

The use of force arises in part from the need to maintain a certain image and to convince potentially angry and cynical men and women that you are worthy of leading them. There was a time when politicians and soldiers, and the leaders of armed movements, genuinely thought that force could bring fairly easy solutions. If so, it is long past. Violence used in pursuit of clear objectives — smash the PLO, drive out the Jew, wake up the West to the Palestinian cause — was bad enough. But what we see now is violence as an aid to political survival.

Even the Islamists may no longer believe in the attainability of their supposed ultimate aims. The splits within both Hamas and Hizbullah show that there are some who, at least tactically, believe in politics now rather than in protracted war. Of those speaking the language of violence in the Middle East, very few really believe that it will get them what they say they expect it to get. And they all have plenty of experience of violence getting them the opposite of what they wanted.

For Shimon Peres, this is a hard time. Twelve years ago, his first task as prime minister was to extract the Israeli army from Lebanon, where it was dangerously dug in after the previous Likud government's invasion went wrong. That invasion had been launched by Ariel Sharon, the embodiment of the idea that force could solve everything. Lebanon proved the reverse. The PLO survived. Lebanese Shi'ites were traumatised and politicised, replacing the PLO as a threat to Israel's northern towns. The attacks of poorly armed Shi'ites on the Israelis are said to have played a part in inspiring the intifada.

The chain of consequences still goes on. Now Israel has struck at Beirut and at other places in Lebanon. Threats coming from Ori Orr, the Israeli deputy defence minister, go beyond reprisals on Hizbullah to suggest that the destruction of Lebanon's economy is not beyond consideration. The Lebanese, Orr ominously suggests, may "have to consider if they want Lebanon to develop . . . or if investment in Lebanon will stop, and Lebanon will return to its plight of a few years ago". Mr Peres must be asking how many times he has been here before — making threats and at the same time fearing the consequences of having to carry them out.

His excuse, of course, is that he has to make war in order to make peace. A failure to act after Hizbullah fired rockets on northern Israel could have lost him next month's elections. If he loses, the chances for peace are dim indeed. The Likud party and its leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, offer policies that would push the region into limbo, combining a refusal to go forward with the Palestinians with an unwillingness to reinstate the occupation. The Labour government's reaction to the Hizbullah attacks, as to the Hamas suicide bombs before them, is that something must be seen to be done, and "something" in the Middle East usually involves high explosive.

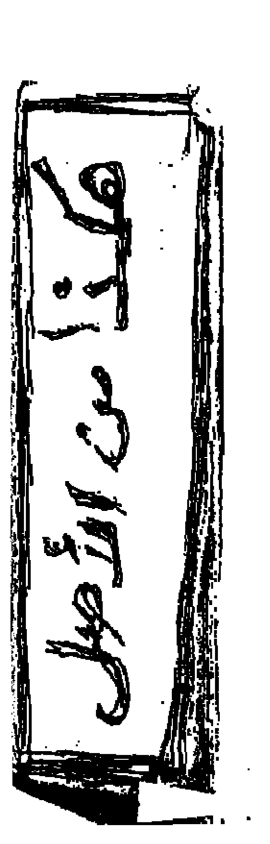
But if Israel has its excuses, so have the other actors. To say that Syria should not have permitted the Hizbullah attacks is to overlook the tangled story of Syrian and Iranian patronage of that movement. Iran's intransigence relates to the efforts of the United States, and Israel, to isolate and punish that difficult country. Syria's intransigence, less marked, relates to Syrian fears that it will not get full restitution of its Golan territory, and that it may in the future also be isolated by the development of an Israel-Palestine-Jordan economic and political zone.

AS TO Hizbullah and Hamas, they are, in their own understanding, at war. They cannot be treated purely as pathology, or, as Netanyahu would have it, as evil forces supported by evil countries. There is a social basis to their existence, and a history to their aspirations that cannot be ignored.

It is inane to say that, at the end of the day, people have to talk. The divergence of objectives in the Middle East is such that regimes, and even peoples, see their very existence as at stake. But the change that made the Middle East after Oslo a different place was that, for the first time, Israelis and Palestinians recognised that neither was strong enough to achieve those objectives. Peace could grow out of a recognition of the impossible, that there could be no Greater Israel, nor an Arab Palestine from the Jordan to the Sea. Syria, too, might be brought to recognise that its ambitions to dominate in the central Middle East were unrealistic.

True, a kind of Greater Israel ambition could be said to survive in the vision of a Middle East which would be, in the words of Peres, "dominated by banks, not tanks, ballots not bullets". The Israeli economy, in other words, might succeed where the Israeli army failed.

But the Islamists are not truly to be cast, at least not yet, as complete villains, but as movements who have not yet understood the impossibility of winning outright victories. In the meantime, the knowledge that force is not the answer combines with a certain inevitability about its use.



The whole world's gone logo

Adam Sweeting on the global marketing monster and the remorseless advance of the admen

WHILE Claudio Abbado was making headlines by taking umbrage with Deutsche Grammophon for issuing a compilation of slow movements pruned from his recordings of Mahler symphonies, an infinitely more horrifying specimen of classical cross-promotional in soundbite form was being readied for launch. It was Appassionata, subtitled The Music From The Book By Jilly Cooper. Jilly says the album is "a stunning recording of all the most beautiful music featured in the story".

She would know, of course. While researching her book ("a novel about the life and loves of an orchestra"), she narrated Peter And The Wolf at Bristol's Colston Hall, and toured Spain with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, with a view to finding answers to important questions such as "could you bonk a small woman on a glockenspiel?" But the music on her album has been chopped up into such nonsensical fragments that it makes the Abbado compilation look like a model of considered good taste. Even the determinedly frivolous listener might find Appassionata insubstantial. There is 1 minute and 51 seconds' worth of Beethoven's mighty Missa Solemnis and Prokofiev's Peter And The Wolf is allotted a mere 49 seconds.

People involved in juggernaut marketing campaigns are not given to levity and facetiousness and they would go out of their way not to notice the ironic significance of the fact that the Appassionata album was released on April 1. All that matters is that the disc should slot into its allotted space in Bantam Press's promotional strategy for darling Jilly, conveniently carrying the baton between a BBC programme about Cooper and her ghastly coterie of green-wellied sycophants in March, and the official publication of the novel this month. The specific content of the Appassionata album is irrelevant. It is only necessary for it to exist as a highly visible commercial artefact, identified as a "classical" product by the list of famous composers on the sleeve.

The multi-faceted marketing onslaught is scarcely a new idea, but the creeping notion that nothing exists in its own right or on its own merits, but is merely a facet of some grand plan devised for somebody else's benefit, is beginning to gnaw away at the foundations of what we once regarded as certainties. Movies are riddled with product-placement. TV programmes are sponsored by brewers, newspapers or soft drinks companies. And chart-topping records are spin-offs from jeans commercials.

On April 2 an issue of the Daily Mirror turned blue, because the paper had been bought for the day as a promotional tool of the Pepsi corporation. The Mirror revelled in its new role of advertorial sandwich board. "We have both turned blue," it raved. "For the Mirror, it is just for one day. For Pepsi, it is for ever. From today, its cans are going to be blue. To mark this historic change, Pepsi has launched the greatest marketing campaign ever." By some bizarre mental process, the Mirror felt able to stress that this proved that it was a paper "that makes rather than follows the news".

Inside, news (or whatever it is the Mirror usually prints) had turned to blue-rinsed promotional puffery. Page two was bannered BLUEMIN' AMAZING!, while page three boasted a snap of Claudia Schiffer looking coy in a bathrobe, and fondling a can of blue Pepsi. Claudia "becomes a lad's dream girl in one of the new Pepsi adverts", we learned, since Claudia joins Cindy Crawford and Andre Agassi in Pepsi's $3 million TV campaign (Pepsi is spending $300 million worldwide). On page 32, there were details of how to claim your free can of Pepsi at supermarkets.

Surely the Mirror's eagerness to mortgage itself to a multinational soft drinks corporation makes a mockery of any pretence at independent editorial thought or unbiased reporting? But this modest proposal falls flat on its face once we take into account the sorry saga of the Times and its sell-out to the computer software monolith, Microsoft, on August 24 last year, to assist in the massive global launch of Windows 95. The paper's price was reduced to zero as Microsoft paid for the paper's entire print run, reducing the Thunderer to the role of giveaway freesheet in Bill Gates's globe-devouring masterplan.

While the ploy made worldwide headlines for Microsoft, the Times, which once enjoyed an historic role as counsellor to prime ministers and conduit for scrupulous reporting, now clearly carried no greater moral authority than any of the advertisements within its pages.

THERE ARE areas of human endeavour where this kind of rampant image-mongering is accepted as the norm. Rock groups get sponsored by Pepsi or Budweiser. Tennis players are plastered in advertising logos, while footballers and basketball players all seem to work for Nike. Nobody has yet managed to invent a more spectacularly cash-guzzling sphere of activity than Formula 1 motor racing, and considering that each Formula 1 team is running its own miniaturised version of the space programme, constantly experimenting with new electronic systems, lightweight materials and aerodynamics, the necessity for dramatic financial support is obvious.

Even so, you might hope that there was still some tiny space for free will and moral choice, but don't bank on it. Shortly before the new Formula 1 season began, the Jordan team announced a spectacular new deal with Benson & Hedges, allegedly worth $23 million this year alone. Suddenly Jordan's familiar green and white cars were resprayed a sickly B&H-style yellow.

Marlboro, Rothmans, Gitanes and Mild Seven are already big investors in F1, and by jumping on the megabuck sponsorship carousel, Jordan's prospects took an immediate leap forward. Yet only a year ago, team boss Eddie Jordan confided that he was proud of the fact that he was managing to run his team without major tobacco sponsorship. You can't blame the ebullient Irishman for wanting to attract the best personnel to his team and win races but the idea that Formula 1 will do anything for money is not going to boost its appeal to those viewers who still cling to quaint, old-fashioned notions of ethics and sportsmanship.

But maybe there aren't any viewers like that any more, so why worry? Even cricket, supposed repository of sporting values, has fallen into the clutches of globalised marketing. The recent World Cup was the setting for an unsightly squabble between Coke and Pepsi. Coca-Cola had paid $3.7 million to be an official sponsor of the tournament, to which Pepsi riposted by signing up individual players and launching a barrage of TV commercials, in which "their" players were offered a Coke, but turned it down in favour of Pepsi. While drinks intervals were announced by airborne inflatable Coke bottles, Pepsi's clients conspicuously refused to drink the stuff.

The lacklustre England squad are sponsored by Tetley's brewery, but obviously it doesn't work. A multi-billion dollar deal with Nike, share options in a friendly privatised water company and a spin-off album featuring easy-listening snippets of patriotic music might be just what England needs to attract players of the right calibre into the game.



Feeling blue . . . Andre Agassi, Claudia Schiffer and Concorde feature in Pepsi's new campaign

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 21 1996

Government set to sell off Railtrack

Philip Thornton

THE UK government was accused this week of attempting to bribe the public after it unveiled a new package of measures designed to entice small investors to buy shares in Railtrack.

Ministers also revealed almost all of its ownership of the company — the linchpin of railway privatisation — is to be sold off rather than the 51 per cent analysts had expected.

The Labour party and opponents of rail privatisation condemned the use of sweeteners — which include a $104 million dividend payment. The public will be offered shares at a discount to the price paid by institutional investors, on top of sweeteners unveiled last week to allay fears of investors worried by the political risk involved in the run-up to a general election.

Labour said it would mount an attempt to overturn the Government's slim one-vote majority and block the sale by marshalling support from Ulster Unionist MPs and Tories unhappy with rail policy in a Commons debate this week. And an alliance of unions and pressure groups opposed to privatisation said they were considering legal action over the dividend, which will be shared by new shareholders in October.

Investors will have to find a minimum of £380 ($570) to buy into Railtrack Group plc.

Under the privatisation plan outlined on Tuesday:

- ☐ The offer will be structured in two parts — a UK Public Offer aimed at ordinary investors and the International Offer targeted at big City investors at home and abroad;
- ☐ The sale to the public starts on May 1 and shares will be priced at 190p with the minimum purchase of 200 shares;
- ☐ The UK Public Offer will be at a discount to the price paid by institutional investors;
- ☐ The price of the second instalment will be the same for both the public and the City.

The Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, said people had shown "significant interest" in the sell-off. "The offer details we have announced have been designed to be attractive to retail investors and I am confident of achieving another successful sale."

But the shadow transport secretary, Clare Short, condemned the sell-off. Privatisation would damage the country's rail network and drive more people on to the roads. "We believe that it's a grave breach of the national interest to sell off all our signalling, the tracks and stations in every town and city in the land at a very, very cheap price."



Now departing . . . the director of rail franchising, Roger Salmon, said he will stand down in October, two years early PHOTO: MAX MUMBY

City analysts believe enthusiasm for the sell-off has been dampened by Labour opposition to the sale, although the party has stopped short of committing itself to buying back Railtrack if it forms the next government.

Ms Short said it would be "irresponsible" for Labour simply to threaten potential investors it would take back Railtrack. If it was sold, Labour had a "detailed programme for making sure we have a better railway", she said. — *PA*

● One of Britain's busiest commuter lines is to be handed over to the French utility firm Companie Générale des Eaux on a seven-year contract, it was announced last week. London and South Coast Ltd will serve nearly 250,000 rail commuters every day.

Meanwhile train drivers who work for the newly privalised Great Western company have been offered a 20 per cent rise if their union, Aslef, also agrees to do away with second drivers in cabs.

Ex-BNFL man warns against 'car boot sale'

A FORMER senior executive in the nuclear power industry has likened the Government's $3.8 billion privatisation of reactors to a car boot sale and advised investors to steer clear, *write Simon Beavis and Paul Brown*.

Harold Bolter, former company secretary of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd, says the Government will sell off eight reactors belonging to British Energy for less than the cost of building just one of them — the $4 billion Sizewell B station in Suffolk.

"Anyone offered an eight-for-the-price-of-one bargain in a car boot sale would be looking for hidden snags — and potential investors in British Energy Ltd should exercise similar caution," Mr Bolter writes in a book, Inside Sellafield.

The price the Government expects to get for seven advanced gas-cooled reactors and Sizewell is an "indication of how desperate it is to get . . . the nuclear industry off its hands".

In a highly disparaging dismissal of the sale, planned for July, he adds: "This is not so much a case of the Government selling off the family silver as disposing of a canteen of old and unwanted cutlery for the best price it can obtain."

Blair offers little comfort to poor

Labour's new concern with community may result in an 'out of sight, out of mind' attitude to poverty in Britain, says **Richard Thomas**

POVERTY has vanished. Not in real life, of course — where the poor are stubbornly still with us — but from public debate. Even the term has become politically incorrect. Euphemisms abound: low income, disadvantaged, socially excluded, vulnerable. "Financially challenged" is surely just around the corner.

The poor have always been stigmatised by the right but now the left seems embarrassed by poverty, too. Don't mention the poor.

Thirty years ago, Brian Abel-Smith, who died earlier this month, "rediscovered" poverty through diligent social research and number-crunching. Another rediscovery is long overdue. For the politicians, if no one else.

The poverty lobby, of course, claims it has been highlighting the plight of the poor on a daily basis. Groups such as the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), formed in the wake of Mr Abel-Smith's 1960s' research, produce reams of statistics. But no one believes them any more.

Last week, the CPAG published a snapshot of poverty* showing that 18.5 million people — a third of the population — are poor, or on the margins of poverty. People are rightly sceptical of such claims. No one in their right mind thinks a third of Britons are poor.

The main reason the outpourings of the poverty industry do not accord with everyday experience is that the figures are based on a cross-section of people — some of whom may be "poor" only for a short time. Many of the people who are poor at one point in time may be back on their feet a few months on.

Paul Johnson, writing in this month's Oxford Review of Economic Policy, shows that half of the people living on or below half average income in one year are above the line 12 months later. Only one in three of those on income support spend more than two years out of work.

There is a world of difference between a middle-manager down on his luck for a few months and a family living on means-tested benefits for decades. Forget about the poverty tourists: it is the chronic, persistent poor — probably accounting for 5-10 per cent of the population — who really matter.

This is all very well, say the anti-poverty activists and Labour, but the only way to garner support from the middle class is to blur this distinction — make us think we are all in this together. Labour's emphasis on insecurity is part of this strategy — most Britons are "only one pay cheque from poverty".

But this tactic could backfire, at least for the poor. Voters know the difference between the fretting middle class and the abject poor — and banging on about the former risks diluting concern for those genuinely in need.

The poor are already marginalised. Not so much by the lack of money but by geography. One of the most striking trends of the past 15 years has been the fracturing of Britain's cities into council-estate ghettos of desperation, alongside smart Georgian squares.

Anne Green, a researcher at the University of Warwick, has charted the growing spatial polarisation between rich and poor during the 1980s. Her work shows that a person in the poorest "travel to work" area is six times more likely to be unemployed than someone in the most affluent. But the real tragedy is in the depths of the poverty: the former's chances of having been out of work for more than a year is 23 times higher than the latter's. There are no tourists here.

The squashing of the poorest into islands of neglect has transformed the experience of poverty. It is one thing to live on benefits in a decent area with little crime, a well-equipped doctor's surgery and good school, quite another to live in fear of a mugging, knowing the chances of your son or daughter getting a GCSE are almost nil. Poverty is not about how much or how little money people have — it is about where they live.

THE NEW geography of poverty demands a recasting of the traditional leftwing agenda of redistribution. Taking money from successful individuals and giving it to the unsuccessful has already gone out of fashion, because taking people's cash makes governments unpopular — but also because it is now accepted that targeting welfare benefits at poor individuals damages work incentives.

Instead of raising the level of benefits, the priority must be to reduce the impact of poverty on people's lives. Teachers and doctors working on sink estates should be paid two or three times as much as colleagues in the leafy areas — whatever it takes to get the best, in place of the worst. Public transport is no longer subsidised by the middle class, so the state will have to do it. The housing stock desperately needs updating.

Instead of redistributing to poor people, we should redistribute to poor places. There are some innovative ways of doing this. One concrete achievement of the Clinton administration was the establishment of the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, which provides free loans to groups in poor areas for locally staffed regeneration. Why not in Britain?

Ultimately, however, the necessary funds can come only from higher taxation on the better-off, or a reduction in their welfare payments — mortgage tax relief and child benefit are prime targets.

But the high walls between rich and poor areas make this harder politically. As Ms Green says: "It is a case of out of sight out of mind. The middle class never come across the people in the council estates — even their kids don't mix."

This is why Labour's new concern with community could spell trouble for the poor. The "communitarians", led by the US guru Amitai Etzioni — and counting Mr Blair among their number — stress the moral responsibility on individuals to look after themselves, their families, neighbours and communities.

As Carey Oppenheim, one of the authors of the CPAG book, says: "Geographical polarisation changes the political agenda, because people don't see themselves as occupying the same world as the poor."

At its worst, community activism can take the form of barricade-building — working together to stop social housing or half-way homes for the mentally ill from "spoiling" the area. Etzioni, in The Spirit Of Community, did recognise this risk: "One of the gravest dangers of rebuilding communities is that they will become insular and indifferent to the fate of outsiders."

But his prescription scarcely amounts to the kind of investment required to rescue the most marginal areas. "The ways [of helping other communities] are almost endless, from sending food, blankets and volunteers when a neighbouring community is overwhelmed to sharing equipment such as snow ploughs."

Blankets are not enough. Communitarianism will only be a progressive force if the fortunate see themselves as being in the same community as the poor. And the fracturing of British society makes this less, rather than more, likely.

The rhetoric of community has a powerful resonance in a society which has witnessed the destruction wrought by rampant individualism. It could be replaced by a rampant "communitism" that would leave the poor as invisible as ever.

*Poverty: The Facts; CPAG, 1-5 Bath Street, London EC1V 9PY

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates April 18	Sterling rates April 1
Australia	1.9074-1.9098	1.9390-1.9428
Austria	16.00-16.02	15.87-15.90
Belgium	46.75-46.79	46.39-46.49
Canada	2.0440-2.0457	2.0669-2.0699
Denmark	8.78-8.79	8.71-8.70
France	7.72-7.72	7.69-7.70
Germany	2.2762-2.2783	2.2579-2.2610
Hong Kong	11.65-11.66	11.80-11.81
Ireland	0.9678-0.9695	0.9689-0.9715
Italy	2,369-2,371	2,389-2,393
Japan	163.34-163.46	163.73-164.00
Netherlands	2.5445-2.5472	2.5260-2.5292
New Zealand	2.2210-2.2243	2.2201-2.2234
Norway	9.81-9.83	9.78-9.80
Portugal	233.42-233.66	232.94-233.56
Spain	189.88-190.12	189.78-190.07
Sweden	10.16-10.18	10.14-10.17
Switzerland	1.8538-1.8562	1.8199-1.8227
USA	1.5074-1.5081	1.5260-1.5280
ECU	1.2157-1.2173	1.2185-1.2197

FTSE100 Share index up 72.1 at 3790.5. FTSE 250 index up [illegible] at 4416.7. Gold down $1.90 at [illegible]

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 21 1996

The Washington Post

Aid Workers' Exodus Adds to Liberia Woes

Jonathan C. Randal
in Freetown, Sierra Leone

WITH the United States nearing conclusion of its helicopter evacuation of foreigners from Monrovia at the weekend, the Liberian capital faces the prospect of coping without the international aid personnel essential to keep the West African nation functioning.

The evacuation of crucial United Nations specialists and private relief workers — an inadvertent consequence of the worst factional violence in Monrovia in the seven-year-old Liberian civil war — has worsened the plight of the city, which is suffering from a severe lack of water, food and sanitation.

Relief workers among the nearly 1,500 foreigners evacuated since Tuesday last week by U.S. Army or Air Force helicopters said in interviews that they will think twice before resuming full operations in Monrovia. Without functioning offices there, distribution of humanitarian aid elsewhere in the country could be compromised, they said.

"Going back in is likely to be a group decision involving the major relief agencies [that] have worked in Liberia," said Joseph DeVries of World Vision International. "95 per cent of their vehicles, records and other infrastructure is now destroyed. By their very presence, relief agencies provided some sense of restraint on the armed factions, because they acted as international observers on the ground. Now almost all have gone."

But as other humanitarian relief workers learned in post-Cold War conflicts in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda, relief workers here say that their presence and good deeds are no substitute for a commitment by major Western powers to maintain law and order.

"Regional solutions for regional problems, African solutions for African problems — that was our mantra back in 1990," an American diplomat who follows African events recalled recently. "But it didn't work out."

Instead of taking an active and direct role in restoring order in Liberia, the Bush administration encouraged and helped bankroll a predominantly Nigerian peacekeeping force described by Liberians and some diplomats in Monrovia as just another looting militia.

Over the years, as U.S. relations with Nigeria deteriorated, Washington found itself unwittingly committed to the West African regional peace force known as ECOMOG, or the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group.

In the first five years of the war in Liberia, most of the country was ransacked, 150,000 Liberians were killed, and more than half the nation's 2.3 million people were displaced, according to relief agencies and diplomats.

By last August, with little left to loot, both ECOMOG and Charles Taylor, the civil servant who invaded on Christmas Eve 1989 from Ivory Coast to overthrow the U.S.-backed government of Samuel K. Doe, appeared ready to cut a deal.

Taylor and rival faction leaders agreed to a six-man Council of State that was entrusted with disarming the various militias as a precondition for holding elections next fall.

Not only did disarmament fail to take place, but the militias smuggled arms into Monrovia in violation of a commitment to keep the capital clear of combatants and weaponry.

As bush fighters became increasingly restless with their leaders' inability to reward them for their years of service, the stage was set for the outbreak of looting by men eager to share in the war's spoils.

The fighting began in Monrovia when Taylor and his allies attacked Roosevelt Johnson, leader of a faction of of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, which controlled strategic territory near the city.

Taylor appears to have miscalculated. His offensive has reunited the ranks of the Krahn, a tribe prominent in the army during Doe's decade-long reign.

Taylor defended his attack, insisting in a radio broadcast that it was "government policy" made necessary by Johnson's misdeeds. But last week, militiamen of Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia broke into an oceanside hotel less than 600 feet from the U.S. Embassy, robbed 40 Lebanese sheltered there and stole all the cars in the parking lot.

In Liberia these days, such lack of discipline is not limited to Taylor's faction. But Taylor, reputedly the toughest-minded of the warlords, has a record of political miscalculation just as power seems about to fall peacefully into his hands.

After defeating Doe's army in 1990, he chose violence rather than move to elections, which observers felt he was assured of winning. In 1992, he launched an offensive against Monrovia that was driven off by ECOMOG.

Dash for safety . . . a US embassy soldier orders Western evacuees to hurry aboard a helicopter leaving Monrovia, the Liberian capital PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHE SIMON

U.S. to Return Okinawa Air Base to Japan

Mary Jordan and
Kevin Sullivan in Tokyo

THE United States announced plans last week to return a key U.S. air base in Okinawa to Japan, a move aimed at soothing tensions over the U.S. military presence here with one of the largest reversions of U.S.-controlled land in Japan since the end of World War II.

The dramatic announcement by U.S. Ambassador Walter F. Mondale and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, carried live on national television, was a symbolic prelude to President Clinton's state visit here this week.

With difficult trade issues expected to remain in the background at the summit, the unexpected base deal will be the centerpiece of a rousing pep rally for the U.S.-Japan security alliance, complete with a Clinton speech on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Independence.

Clinton said in Washington that the agreement addresses "legitimate concerns the people of Okinawa have about noise levels, access to land. I hope we've got a good resolution here that will permit us to defend our own security interests and . . . pursue our interests in the northern Pacific and fulfil our commitments to our Japanese allies."

Mondale and Hashimoto said that the 1,200-acre Futenma Marine Corps Air Station will be closed and returned to Japan within five to seven years. Harrier jets stationed there will return to the United States, while helicopters and tanker planes will move to other sites in Japan. Military personnel from the base will be reassigned to other American bases in Japan, and there will be no reduction in the overall U.S. troop strength here.

Mondale said those measures, plus others designed to reduce "noise and other irritants" in Okinawa, would be formally unveiled in Tokyo by U.S. Defense Secretary William J. Perry, who was visiting just ahead of Clinton. "This demonstrates we have what it takes to build an enduring alliance for the 21st century," said Mondale, standing next to Hashimoto.

The two officials also took the opportunity to hint at another breakthrough that may come during Clinton's visit. Hashimoto said Japan is prepared to consider expanding the role its military would play in supporting U.S. forces in the event of war in the region.

Japan's constitution prohibits it from engaging in anything but defensive military actions. The more conservative factions here interpret that to mean Japan should not resupply U.S. ships, lend spare parts or allow the use of Japanese landing strips to U.S. jets in the event of a crisis. It is remarkable for a Japanese prime minister to say he is even willing to consider such actions.

Officials later said the announcement was made on Friday last week because word of it had leaked out, and the governments wanted to announce the news themselves.

Mondale said the plan had been approved by Clinton, who discussed it with Hashimoto when the two met in California last month.

Futenma air base had come to symbolize Okinawans' anger at the huge U.S. military presence. The base is surrounded by dense residential areas whose residents have complained bitterly about noise from helicopters, Harrier jets and huge tankers that fly in and out.

Until last week, the chances of returning it to Okinawans seemed remote. U.S. officials had declared the base, and its 9,000-foot long runway, vitally important to their strategic mission of keeping stability in the region.

Since last September's rape of a 12-year-old girl by three U.S. servicemen, Okinawans have pressed for a reduction in the U.S. military presence on the southern islands, and Futenma was their primary target.

Okinawa's governor, Masahide Ota, the most vocal critic of the U.S. military in his community, said he was pleased with the announcement. Ota said the return of Futenma had been his "number-one priority," and the decision to return it demonstrated sincerity about Okinawan concerns by Tokyo and Washington. He said he hoped there would be more concessions.

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Mitsubishi Faces Sex Harassment Charges

Kirstin Downey Grimsley

IN A LAWSUIT filed last week, the federal government accused the U.S. subsidiary of Japan's Mitsubishi Motors Corporation of allowing male employees and managers at an Illinois plant to sexually harass hundreds of female workers.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said in its suit that male employees at the Mitsubishi plant in Normal, Illinois, engaged in repeated "groping, grabbing and touching" of female employees, used abusive sexual language to the women, required some to consent to sexual relations as a condition of employment, and forced their resignations if they complained of the treatment.

In a formal statement about the suit, EEOC vice chairman Paul Igasaki said that men called women "sluts, whores and bitches and other names which I cannot repeat" in the workplace. They placed drawings of genitals, breasts and various sexual acts, labeled with female employees' names, on car fenders and cardboard signs along the auto assembly line, he said. Between 300 and 500 women were affected by the behavior, the agency said.

Gary Shultz, vice president and general counsel for the subsidiary, Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America Inc., denied the allegations and said that the EEOC's lawsuit and public comments on the charges were motivated by election-year politics.

"This is a mean streak," Shultz said. "It is more than unfair. They're trying it in the public."

In an earlier statement, Shultz said that "discrimination of any kind will never [be] — and has never been — tolerated at this plant. We find harassment in the workplace to be reprehensible and it has no place" at his company.

The EEOC called its action "the largest sexual harassment suit nationwide" since the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. The filing comes at a time when the agency's entire mission has been called into question by some members of the Republican-controlled Congress. They contend that efforts to assure equal opportunity have gone too far and have become an unfair burden on employers.

Recently, the EEOC has come under criticism for its handling of an investigation of the Hooter's Inc. restaurant chain, which has been the subject of numerous sexual harassment and gender discrimination lawsuits by male and female employees. In the fall, Hooter's launched a successful public relations counterattack on the agency, ridiculing its actions. Facing Congressional pressure, the EEOC has backed down on the case and is unlikely to file a lawsuit, sources in the agency have said.

The Mitsubishi plant was built in 1988 as a joint venture of Chrysler Corporation and Mitsubishi. In 1991, Mitsubishi bought out Chrysler's interest in the plant. Today it manufactures cars including Mitsubishi Eclipses and Galants, Chrysler Eagle Talons and Sebrings and Dodge Avengers. It employs about 4,000 workers, mostly Americans and about 70 Japanese. Some top managers are American and others are Japanese.

The EEOC is seeking back pay for the women, as well as compensatory and punitive damages, which could add up to more than $10 million, according to John Rowe, director of the EEOC's office in Chicago. The class-action lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Peoria, Illinois.

The EEOC investigation was initiated in early 1994 by R. Gaull Silbermann, a Republican commissioner originally appointed by President Reagan, after 26 female employees at the plant made a formal complaint to the agency.

"This case should have a significant impact beyond the parties and should send the strong message that sexual harassment in the workplace, whether in office suites or on the assembly line floor, will not be tolerated — especially not on the outrageous scale that we see here," Igasaki said.

Igasaki said that investigators found that:

- Male employees and supervisors ridiculed, ostracized and physically threatened women who complained of the treatment, and sabotaged their work;
- Forced women to resign to escape the harassment;
- In at least one case, a male employee put his air gun between a female's legs and pulled the trigger.

"There were many other kinds of physical sexual harassment," Igasaki said at a news conference in Chicago. "They are all serious."

EEOC officials in Chicago said that many male employees at the plant, most of them Americans, took part in the harassment, but that top officials failed to put an end to it. They said that some men who sought to speak up about the harassment were punished for protesting.

Rowe said that in one case, a married man who worked at the plant entered the men's room and found a written description of his wife's supposed participation in group sex with men who worked at the plant.

"It was an untrue allegation about his wife up on the wall, with implications to their marriage and family life," Rowe said. These actions "had extreme consequences and psychological effects on the employees. This case stands apart."

Shultz of Mitsubishi said the company investigated the charges when they were first brought in 1993 and 1994, initially by the 26 female employees, and found that the company's "policies, practices and procedures were quite effective, more than adequate. They are very stern."

The 26 employees continue to pursue their case, independently of the EEOC investigation, with a suit filed in U.S. District Court. Attorneys representing them declined to make them available.

In August 1995, the EEOC announced its largest-ever such settlement in a sexual harassment case. Del Laboratories, a cosmetics firm based in Farmingdale, New York, which makes Sally Hansen Cosmetics and Hard As Nails manicure products, agreed to pay $1.2 million to settle the lawsuit.

In the lawsuit, Del Labs Chairman Dan K. Wassong was charged by 15 female assistants with touching female employees' breasts and buttocks, asking for oral sex, conducting business with his pants zipper open and using abusive sexual language to women workers. Del Labs officials denied that any civil rights violations had occurred.

Economies in Latin States 'Too Slow'

Gabriel Escobar in La Paz

A UNITED NATIONS study has concluded that Latin American economies, although more stable, are growing at such a modest rate that poverty, unemployment and other social ills remain unchanged and in some instances have worsened in the past decade despite sweeping market reforms.

The study, by the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, will be released formally this week at the biannual commission meeting in Costa Rica. Put together by staff economists, it offers a sobering look at the region and is certain to fuel debate between those who favor free market liberalization and those who argue that the gap between rich and poor is increasing.

More evidence that a decade of macroeconomic stability has not improved the lives of the poor is bound to increase already enormous pressure on most of the hemisphere's governments. With criticism coming from such disparate sources as Pope John Paul II and Mexican rebel leader Subcomandante Marcos, governments are being asked to address social problems while at the same time adhering to tight fiscal policies demanded by the prevailing economic model.

The U.N. report concludes that structural and economic reforms born out of the debt crisis of the early 1980s constitute a "fundamental transformation in the region's process of development." But even though it acknowledges the reforms stabilized prices, attracted foreign investment and strengthened democracies, the study paints a pessimistic picture of what all this has meant so far to the region's poor — who are a majority.

The study concludes that the region has not yet created enough jobs to help reduce poverty or close the gap between rich and poor. The poor in some instances are worse off today than before the fiscal crisis of the early 1980s, which wiped out significant gains of the previous two decades, according to the report.

It says policies to address social problems have been "insufficient," either too limited or too constricted by tight monetary policies to make a significant difference. Although not mentioned in the study, frustration over the economic model is one of the principal causes of civic unrest in the region, responsible for the peasant uprising in Mexico as well as periodic riots in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and elsewhere.

In one of the more sobering conclusions, the study says the delicate social situation could shake the foundations upon which the reforms rest. "This presents a not-too healthy social panorama," the study concludes, according to a summary released by the commission, "with latent problems that could make it difficult to sustain the process of development."

Gert Rosenthal, the commission's secretary general, said the region is still better off than six or seven years ago, when many countries were struggling with the aftermath of the fiscal crisis. But he said the reforms are "not yet consolidated, and the purpose of this document is to convince governments that there is room for public policies."

Crash Pilot's Mother Says Choice Right

Tom Kenworthy
and Kathryn Wexler

STANDING before the spot where where her daughter died in the crumpled wreckage of a single-engine plane, Lisa Blair Hathaway last week defended her decision to allow seven-year-old Jessica Dubroff to attempt a cross-country flight that ended in tragedy in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

"You look at Jess and tell me how you can question that," said Hathaway as she knelt with her two surviving children next to a makeshift shrine bedecked with flowers and stuffed animals 50 yards from the driveway where the Cessna 177 carrying Jessica, her father Lloyd Dubroff and her flight instructor Joe Reid plummeted to the ground. "Jess did what she enjoyed: she had a full, wonderful, wonderful, exquisite life."

Hathaway's outward calm in explaining the great tragedy of her daughter's death as the price of an expansive and joy-filled life came as criticism mounted nationwide of both Jessica Dubroff's parents and an aviation system that allowed the accident to happen. The three occupants of the small plane died instantly about 8:30am on Thursday last week, shortly after taking off from Cheyenne Municipal Airport in a driving rainstorm accompanied by strong winds and sleet daunting enough to have dissuaded at least one other aircraft from taking off. Dubroff, who would have turned eight next month, was attempting to become the youngest pilot to complete a cross-country flight.

Jessica Dubroff, aged seven, stands beside her Cessna plane before her record flight attempt ended in tragedy last week

Hathaway spoke with great equanimity of her daughter's life and death in terms that appeared to reflect the family's unconventional life in Pescadero, California. "I simply am here for my own well-being," said Hathaway, who has described herself as a "spiritual healer."

Earlier in the day, during an appearance on NBC's Today show, Hathaway sobbed about her daughter's death, while defending the decision to let her fly. "She had a freedom which you can't get by holding her back," a crying Hathaway said as she cradled her three-year-old daughter, Jasmine.

Amid calls in Washington and across the country for regulatory and legislative restrictions on flights by children, Hathaway implored the Federal Aviation Administration not to inhibit young people who seek fulfilment and self-expression in the air. "There's a lot of great pilots out there of any age," she said. "To hold anyone back is to miss the message."

Legislation is expected to be introduced in Congress this week that would prohibit the very young from piloting planes, and Senate Commerce Committee chairman Larry Pressler, R-South Dakota, said lax rules by the FAA encouraged the kind of competition that led to Dubroff's death.

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, which represents more than 340,000 general aviation pilots, continues to oppose tougher regulation of young flyers, but said the crash should put an end to such "youngest pilot competition." Drew Steketee, AOPA's senior vice president for communications, said, "AOPA and many people in the general aviation community have been uncomfortable with these flights."

Investigators for the National Transportation Safety Board met in Greeley, Colorado to pore over the wreckage of the Cessna 177. Chief investigator Steve McCreary said a final determination of the cause might take up to six months.

The question that was on the minds of many people — why would Jessica Dubroff's parents not just countenance a seven-year-old's quest for an aviation record but encourage it — came into somewhat clearer focus during Hathaway's hour-long encounter with scores of reporters at the crash scene on Kornegay Street in Cheyenne.

Jessica's life may have been cut short, said Hathaway, but that is no argument for denying her a rich childhood in which she reveled in the freedom of her parents' philosophy that children should be given great latitude to learn by experimentation and exploration rather than by sitting in a classroom.

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India, Pakistan Fight for Nuclear Parity

Kenneth J. Cooper in Islamabad

ONE country tests a new missile, the other vows to develop a similar one of its own. One prepares for an underground nuclear test, the other gets ready to do likewise. One proposes to increase its defense budget, the other threatens to match the rise.

It is almost as if the Cold War has started all over again, this time in South Asia, as an insecure Pakistan tries to keep up with its archenemy and much larger neighbor, India, in a race to develop their nuclear arsenals and the means to deliver them. With the two countries locked in a long-standing rivalry over Kashmir, the CIA has warned that the world's greatest potential for nuclear conflict lies in this region.

The subcontinental arms race has caused complications in U.S. relations with India and Pakistan alike, with both countries unlikely to agree to an international nuclear test ban being negotiated in Geneva. In addition, it has created an extra irritant in relations with China, a country the CIA contends has supplied nuclear-related material to Pakistan.

The arms race has intensified because of several developments in the past year. In India, the ruling Congress Party has adopted a more hawkish stance in advance of parliamentary elections beginning later this month and extending into May. The New Delhi government said it was provoked by U.S. consideration of the release of $368 million in conventional arms to Pakistan and by China's reported shipment to Pakistan of specialized magnets used to enrich uranium.

Reports circulated in Washington last December that India was preparing a site for an underground nuclear explosion, which would be its first since the surprise initial test blast in 1974. But the plans were suspended in the face of U.S. protests, according to a congressional source.

Then in January, India ignored U.S. objections and carried out another test of its new Prithvi II missile, which can carry nuclear warheads and has a range of 155 miles, enough to reach such Pakistani cities as Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. It remains unclear, however, whether India has actually deployed the missile, which officials in Pakistan suspect was designed to attack its major cities.

Whatever India's motivations, Pakistan has vowed not to be outdone. "If India wants to prove its manhood by conducting a nuclear test, then we have the capability to [prove] our manhood," Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmed Ali told Pakistan's parliament last month. "We don't want to carry out a nuclear test, but we have taken all measures for the security of the country."

The tensions between the two South Asian neighbors — which have fought three wars — are rooted in religion and the dispute over Kashmir. When the British left the subcontinent in 1947, the Islamic republic of Pakistan was created as a haven for Muslims who had suffered discrimination at the hands of India's predominant Hindus, while what remained of British India became a secular democracy with one Muslim-majority province: Jammu and Kashmir.

The military rivalry turned nuclear in 1974 after India conducted its only underground test so far. In response, then-Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto — the father of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto — declared that impoverished Pakistan would "go for nuclear status even if we have to eat grass."

Since 1987, Pakistan has said it possesses the know-how and material to make nuclear weapons, but it has yet to demonstrate its capability by testing one.

One Western diplomat suggested that India and Pakistan have been confronted with decisions about whether to build up their nuclear capacity as the rest of the world moves away from developing nuclear arsenals or adding to existing ones. Last year, neither country signed an indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Nor does either appear willing to embrace a comprehensive test-ban treaty being drafted by 38 nations.

Pakistan has indicated it will not sign the treaties unless India does. India has criticized the NPT and draft test-ban treaty as discriminatory because they constrain nuclear threshold states without taking nuclear weapons away from the five nations that acknowledge having them: the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain.

As a result, India has sought to link the test ban to a definite timetable for eliminating nuclear weapons. "It would not be a meaningful treaty if it's not going to be a disarmament step," Arundhati Ghose, India's negotiator on the test ban, said in an interview from Geneva. "You need a target date for when this process will end . . . at least acceptance of a concept that there must be a target date" for eliminating nuclear arsenals. "We can negotiate the actual target date later."

More than 60 percent of urban Indians surveyed last December by India Today magazine said they would approve if the nation conducted another test blast. And 72 percent rated "protecting ourselves against nuclear threats from China and Pakistan" as the most important reason to have a nuclear program.

Nuclear weapons capability is even more popular in Pakistan, where opinion surveys consistently have shown about 80 percent saying the country should have an arsenal. A Gallup poll in January indicated similar support for Pakistan to conduct a nuclear test if India does.

Pakistan, a nation of 130 million, fears being overwhelmed militarily by India, which has a population of more than 900 million. India's conventional forces outnumber Pakistan's by about 2 to 1, and many Pakistanis consider having a credible threat of nuclear retaliation a matter of national survival.

"At least in our mind, if not on the ground, the race is on," a senior Pakistani military officer said. "The Cold War is on."

Voices of Black America

Jim Sleeper

COMING THROUGH THE FIRE
Surviving Race and Place in America
By C. Eric Lincoln
Duke University Press. 157pp. $17.95

THE TROUBLE WITH FRIENDSHIP
Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race
By Benjamin DeMott
Atlantic Monthly Press. 214pp. $22

THE FUTURE OF THE RACE
By Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West
Knopf. 196pp. $21

EVER SINCE Frederick Douglass stunned a white Fourth of July audience in 1852 by asking "What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national Independence?", many blacks have felt torn between asserting an unbridled, American personal freedom and maintaining a distinctive racial solidarity. That struggle proceeds in terms barely intelligible to most whites, who came here by personal choice, not through wholesale abduction, cultural dispossession, and confinement to a caste.

Lately, however, the tension between transracial dignity and racial loyalty, elucidated so vividly by Douglass and, later, W.E.B. Du Bois, has taken a new twist. The mainstreaming of black celebrities, artists, politicians and professionals — not to mention the "multiculturalizing" of the old, Anglo-conformist society by other nonwhites — has prompted new, complicated reflections such as those by the four writers under review. So has the loss, noted often in these books, of a coherent America, racist or otherwise. Once, blacks knew what they were up against, and thus a racist society's cohesion offered firm moral footholds, even as it threw up barriers.

And now?

Henry Louis Gates Jr. sounds uneasy beneath his urbane memoir of undergraduate struggles with blackness at Yale. Cornel West sounds almost despairing beneath his typically windy invocations of "radical democracy." Benjamin DeMott seems trapped in the hair shirt some "old stock" white liberals donned long ago. Only C. Eric Lincoln, the grand old man of the four, vividly chronicling his experiences in the Alabama of the 1930s, throws out a luminous, gossamer thread of hope. Lincoln's Coming Through The Fire is a worthy sequel to James Baldwin's angry The Fire Next Time. Time will tell whether the United States is worthy of this beautiful book.

Gates and West, both professors in the Harvard Afro-American Studies department that Gates chairs, collaborate in The Future Of The Race not so much to honor Du Bois as to "revaluate" him. Their jointly written introduction, their two separate essays, and an appendix in which Gates introduces Du Bois's 1903 essay "The Talented Tenth" and Du Bois's 1948 address elaborating on it, make for an unresolved effort whose contributors wander off in different directions.

Du Bois's own contribution is well known. He called for a black elite — "the Talented Tenth" — to instruct, challenge and champion the race on its way to integration, even as he wondered, "Can I be both [an American and a Negro]? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and to be an American?" His own answer to the question came in 1961 when, after witnessing Jim Crow's first defeats by the Civil Rights movement, he left the United States to spend his last days pursuing an elusive, quasi-Marxist, black-nationalist vision in Ghana.

That pessimism and the parlous condition of black leadership today launch Gates on a mournful recollection of his and other black students' struggles with Du Bois's famous question at Yale in the early 1970s. The university was solicitous of their gropings and racial wagon-circling, but Gates notes that quite a few of his "Talented Tenth" circle have since died of hypertension or violence at black hands. He doesn't blame racism as much as the flight of those he knew from Yale's opportunities into a defensive blackness. But, unlike them, he says, he couldn't "allow blackness to rob me of what I wistfully and portentously called 'my humanity' . . . Only sometimes do I feel guilty that I was among the lucky ones" at Yale, he concludes, "and only sometimes do I ask myself why."

The real answer seems to be that he has chosen humanism over racialism — a commitment he has expressed by condemning black antisemitism. That



is also an answer to Du Bois's question about whether one must shed black solidarity, at least sometimes, in order to be an American.

Cornel West's answer is delivered, not in a memoir, but in what he calls a "prophetic" manifesto. He thinks there is no point in being American in the sense Du Bois understood it, for that America is failing, and Du Bois was part of the reason for its failure. Du Bois, West tells us, was too bound up in Enlightenment rationalism, too strategically Victorian, too patriarchal and elitist, and too distant from grassroots black culture to comprehend "the distinctive black tragicomic sense" and to "confront the sheer absurdity of the human condition."

West thinks that Du Bois's "Enlightenment naïveté" — his belief that "the cure for [evil] was knowledge based on scientific investigation" — condemned him to despair. Then, too, because America itself is a "twilight civilization," as West calls it, we must embrace radical, spiritual democratic action. He believes that the best of the marginalized, but vital, black culture can show us the way, the more so if Du Bois's "Talented Tenth" avoids becoming "intoxicated with the felicities of a parvenu bourgeois experience" and embraces the tragicomic "spirit of John Coltrane and Toni Morrison," a "hope not hopeless but unhopeful."

This is indeed tragicomic and absurd, though perhaps not as prophetic as West would have us believe. While West may not be entirely wrong about Du Bois, he is certainly unclear about how black cultural genius or his notions of radical democracy can redeem us.

It is also, at least partly, a bad rap on the many white moralists who, in person and in spirit, nourished the early experiences and later reflections of many blacks besides Du Bois. But this moralism had its censorious, condescending underside, and Benjamin DeMott, an "old stock" New Englander, is so tortured a bearer of Puritan guilt and its expiatory impulses that I can't imagine many blacks basking in his solicitude.

DeMott warns, usefully, that mainstream America tries to wish its racism away in tokenism and the amiable banter of black and white TV anchors. But he's so intent on portraying blacks as prisoners of caste that he ends up reinforcing the negative stereotypes that even some racists disclaim.

He protests the "homicidal neglect" conviction of a black welfare mother whose children burned to death when she left them alone. She'd left them alone often, but DeMott is troubled that both her (black) prosecutor and (white) defense attorney accepted the premise of any criminal trial — that the defendant should be judged by her choices, such as whether she'd secured adequate adult supervision for her children. He blames society for her "bottom caste" behavior: "Black America includes millions of welfare mothers, the majority overwhelmed by their lives" and isolated from suburbs where "sprinklers glint on combed lawns" and people "thumbtack prized baby-sitter phone lists to their kitchen bulletin boards."

Has DeMott ever spent a week in a poor neighborhood? To suspend judgment of this mother in deference to her "caste status" is to deny all black welfare mothers' capacity to assume responsibility as parents. Perhaps DeMott thinks they also shouldn't serve on juries or vote. The entertainment world shouldn't laugh racism away, but neither should white social critics reinforce negative stereotypes while massaging their own guilt.

Like DeMott, C. Eric Lincoln, professor emeritus at Duke University and a noted scholar of black religion, argues that "few of the changes we hoped for have been truly accomplished, even though the cosmetics of progress are always being paraded before us with cynical reassurance." Like West, Lincoln finds that "Du Bois' search for identity was essentially a personal intellectual exercise," divorced from ordinary blacks' struggles. But Lincoln's great, classic personal essay transcends race itself in ways the other authors claim they want to, and think we should, but don't. Unlike them, he makes his deep personal experience of racism the wellspring of a transracial American vision.

In the 1920s, when his mother was a domestic for "quality" whites in his native, Athens, Alabama, the tiny Lincoln played with the family's children and other white kids. He stepped forward with them in a health clinic line, only to be grabbed and told, " '*All you niggers have to wait!*' As I stood against the wall rubbing my arm," he recalls, "I soon came to realize that it was not my arm that was hurting, it was my soul. There was a sort of numbness, a *dead* feeling. The pain was inside me, and I would never be able to rub it away."

Yet he recounts this to show that if one cannot rub it away, one may perhaps redeem its hurtful memory by keeping a canny sort of faith with former white playmates, who were as imprisoned by racism's fraudulent consensus as he was. "*Race is a fantasy* [italics his]. A chimera," he insists. "A stalking horse for power and privilege." Doesn't that make it indelible in those wounded in childhood? Yes, but Lincoln would oppose retreating into blackness as some of Gates's classmates did at a Yale that was open to them; he would also oppose black wagon-circling even in the teeth of racism itself.

This takes some explaining, and Lincoln does it with a grounded eloquence that reopens our racial dialogue. Because only whites have power to exclude others from resources in America, "black racism will never be more than a voice of defiant impotence screaming out its frustrations." But not only is black racism "a notion with nowhere to go and no way to get there," he continues, "that is as it should be. One kettle of putrefaction is enough . . ."

Lincoln would shed even a redemptive blackness to mix with whites who disown both their own putative supremacy and counterproductive guilt. He calls for a society that is beyond race: "The supreme disloyalty is not to a bell [of racial solidarity] that has tolled itself into silence, but to the bell that has yet to ring . . . If transracial marriage is here, and biracial children are here, can transracial adoptions be far behind?"

Lincoln is not ashamed to say this; he glories in it, defying the "risk in ignoring [racial] convention, in being out of step with the agents of panic and the gurus of political correctness. It is time now to reach for the hand that is reaching for tomorrow, whatever color that hand may be. The evening of today is already far spent."

Lincoln's own evening is breathtakingly beautiful. The Civil Rights movement has lost so much ground to agents of panic and gurus of correctness that Gates's response to our situation is too elegiac and ironical, while West's is too windy and ethereal. Unlike them, however, Lincoln, now approaching 80, doesn't need a career, doesn't need to position himself. Instead, he dips into his bag to share an elder's evergreen wisdom, a candor and compassion beyond color. His answer to Du Bois's question — black and/or American — is unequivocal: Whenever C. Eric Lincoln writes of our society, he says "we."

Paperbacks

Non-fiction

Nomads of the Dawn: The Penan of the Borneo Rain Forest, by Wade Davis, Ian Mackenzie and Shane Kennedy (Pomegranate Artbooks, $24.95)

ALONG the Ubong River, in the tropical rain forests of Sarawak, the northwestern province of Malaysian Borneo, lies the traditional homeland of the Penan. These nomadic hunters have lived in Sarawak's forests since time immemorial; now, as the chainsaws and bulldozers of logging operations raze the forests, an ancient way of life faces extinction. Sarawak's exports of unprocessed timber have risen from 6.7 million cubic meters in 1980 to 18.8 million in 1990; the World Bank estimates that logging is taking place at four times the sustainable rate. The book juxtaposes photographs of the Penan and the rain forest with first-person testimonials about Penan traditions and the anger and agony they feel about the destruction of their home. "If they continue to extract timber from our forest," says Along Sega, a Penan headman, "our lives will wither like leaves on the trees, like fish without water."

Cavafy's Alexandria, by Edmund Keeley (Princeton University Press, $15.95)

NOT LONG ago, Cavafy made an unexpected appearance in the news when Maurice Tempelsman read from the poem "Ithaka" at Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's funeral. Readers who want to explore Cavafy's work further might find this study of the poet and his city, Alexandria, Egypt, "the mythical city that shaped his vision" — a useful companion. Writes Keeley: "My hope is that this book will now be read in conjunction with Cavafy's collected poems and so perhaps serve as a guide for the uninitiated reader during the grand adventure in discovery, with its 'rare excitement' that an unhurried journey through the world of Cavafy's poems promises . . ."

Backward and Upward: The New Conservative Writing, edited with an Introduction by David Brooks (Vintage, $13)

RUSH LIMBAUGH the Falstaff of conservatism? A former Reagan speechwriter who's an [illegible] surfer? Nothing surprising in this according to David Brooks: Conservatives aren't the stick-in-the-[illegible] that liberals think they are, and this collection of essays, he sets out to prove it by bringing together examples of the witty, irreverent, provocative thinking that, he says, characterizes the new conservatives. Here is Christopher Buckley musing on the follies of young people with White House connections: "Who's going to tell them no? They work for the president of the United States. I've seen twentysomethings reduce governors of consequential states to fuming impotence — and relish every second of it. I watched one tell a government official of a significant foreign power, after viewing the spectacular nineteenth-century palace where the bilateral [illegible] would take place, 'The facilities will be adequate.' " Other contributors include Peggy Noonan, Fred Barnes, P.J. O'Rourke, William Kristol and the Falstaffian Limbaugh writing on "Why Liberals Fear Me."

Economic woes cast shadow over polls

Marie-Claude Decamps and **Salvatore Aloïse** in Rome on why Italians are feeling gloomy in the run-up to general elections

OLD clichés die hard. Although the Italian tourist industry continues to attract foreign visitors by putting across a glossy image of *la dolce vita*, the truth is very different. The average Italian male does not wear Todd's footwear or Marinella ties, or spend his time at the wheel of his Alfa Romeo calling up his girlfriend on a mobile phone to ask her to make a dish of Barilla pasta as advertised by Gérard Depardieu.

The gossip columns that focused on the former *condottieri* of the Italian economic miracle in the eighties have been replaced by reports on the evil doings of moneylenders.

Franco Cazzola, a political pundit, says: "The Italians are former *nouveaux riches* who have got to come to terms with the fact that their privileges are a thing of the past and they're going to have to lead normal lives again."

In the past three years, 700,000 jobs have been shed. As a result, there are 2.7 million unemployed. The jobless rate is 12.2 per cent, with peaks in the south of 30 per cent, and even 56 per cent among the young.

While private enterprise is thriving, those entering the job market for the first time face an uphill struggle. It is hardly surprising, in a country burdened with debt and mounting social disparities, that moneylenders — known as *strozzini* (stranglers) — have been proliferating. Ten years ago, 80,000 families had fallen into their clutches; the figure is now 600,000.

What has gone wrong? The Italians used to muddle through thanks to the flexibility of the system. Moonlighting, especially in the south, had the effect of making unemployment rates not as bad as they looked. Cushy retirement terms in the public sector produced a host of happy "baby-pensioners", some of them not yet 40. And then there was the disability scam, when 7 million pensions were paid out even though only 4 million disabled were officially registered.

Guido Rey, an economics professor, says: "The public sector ended up encouraging moonlighting, not only because of high tax pressure, but also because of its inefficiency, which caused strong growth in privately owned services to make up for that shortcoming."

Then the system gradually began to get out of kilter. The government's efforts to reduce the deficit and tighten the budget to conform with the Maastricht treaty criteria hit the taxpayer hard. Successive administrations set about reforming pensions and reducing medical and social spending to a minimum.

With inflation more or less under control, but still running far ahead of pay rises, anyone unlucky enough to fall ill for a long period is bound to drop below the poverty line; 2.5 million families are currently thought to fall into that category, and their number will rise to 3 million by 2000.

As a result, according to the sociologist Giampaolo Fabris, "Italy has become a country that is anxious about the future, where people have to content themselves with the status quo while at the same time scaling down their expectations."

Poverty has become a real threat even to the middle classes, and especially to self-employed workers, shopkeepers and craftsmen, all of them notorious tax evaders who now find their income tax bill has doubled.

The economist Sergio Ricossa regrets the flexibility of the old days: "Luckily there's no magic wand that can totally eliminate tax evasion — things would be worse for Italy. Unemployment would rise and many small companies would go under. In the end, the taxman would lose out."

This kind of fiscal "revisionism" is central to what has so far been a dull campaign for the elections on April 21. The watchword is: let's be nice to the self-employed (30 per cent of the working population) and to shopkeepers. The latter group organised a spectacular "shutters-down" day of protest two weeks ago.

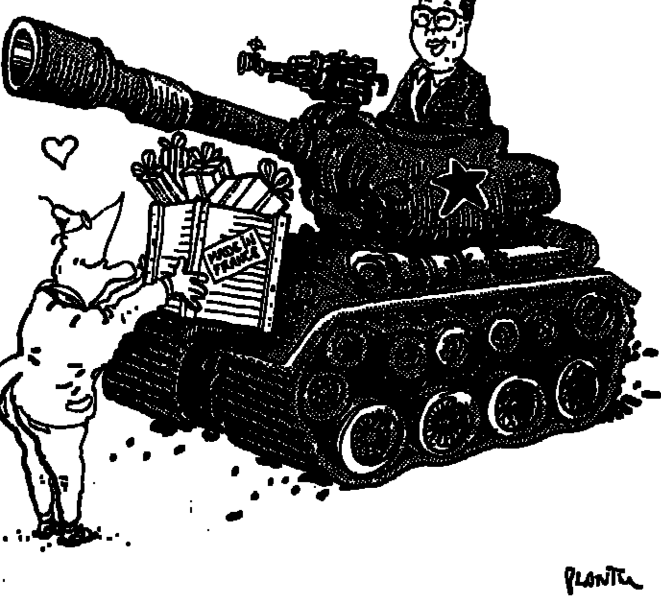
But other taxpayers need not worry. There will be something for everybody. Gianfranco Fini, head of the National Alliance, has suggested that tax should no longer be deducted at source from salaries and pensions. The centre-right grouping has also suggested cutting income tax and reducing the number of different taxes from 100 to eight.

Caught on the hop, the left has tried to climb on the bandwagon. But it is moving cautiously: it has refrained from promising cuts within the next two years at least, preferring to propose a harmonisation and simplification of the tax system.

(April 11)

Despite blips, France makes big China sale

Jean-Pierre Clerc and Christophe Jakubyszyn



BEFORE his four-day trip to France, which began on April 9, the Chinese prime minister, Li Peng, told a French television station: "Throughout the world, different countries have different conceptions of the human rights issue."

By the time his visit was over, France had made a token stand over the human rights situation in China — and signed contracts worth $2 billion, including the firm purchase by China of 10 Airbus A320 aircraft and its intended order of 20 others.

The day after the French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, had announced that he had handed his Chinese opposite number, Qian Qichen, a list of 20 political prisoners, Li's spokesman told a press conference he had no knowledge of any such list: "Your information is incorrect. In the past, when such lists have been handed to us, the people featuring on them did not exist."

This episode illustrated the difficulty of establishing the facts when dealing with the Chinese. Two days after his arrival in France, Li said: "Up to now, my visit has gone well."

Yet only the previous day there had been a serious diplomatic incident. To show his irritation at hostile comments in the French press and two demonstrations in Paris by human rights protesters, the Chinese prime minister not only arrived an hour and a half late for an official dinner at the Quai d'Orsay, but succeeded in persuading the French prime minister, Alain Juppé, who was due to raise the human rights issue in a speech at the dinner, that there should be none of the traditional toasts — and therefore no speeches — during the occasion.

The Chinese version of events was different. Li's spokesman claimed that "the atmosphere had been very good", adding: "Negotiations over the contracts took longer than expected, and the banquet, too, lasted a long time, so both sides agreed that there would be no speeches."

Certainly relations were back to normal the day after the incident, when Li visited the Elysées Palace twice. On his first trip he witnessed, along with President Jacques Chirac, the signing of a letter of intent on the joint manufacture by China and the French-Italian-British consortium A1 (R) of a 100-seater "regional" aircraft. Later, he had lunch and talks with the president.

Li's spokesman said there was no "fundamental clash of interests between our two countries", and expressed satisfaction at the "very clear" stance on Taiwan adopted by France, which recognises the existence of only one China. It emerged that the French consulate in Canton, which China had closed down in January 1993 as a protest against France's sale of 60 Mirage 2,000 jets to Taipei, was going to reopen.

The spokesman said the two countries were also going "to step up their consultations" over the current Geneva talks aimed at implementing a total nuclear test-ban treaty.

The joint venture for the construction of a 100-seater aircraft came as a blow to the US manufacturer Boeing, which currently has about 80 per cent of the Chinese aircraft market. The company's shares dipped by almost 2 per cent on Wall Street.

When asked if Boeing was completely out of the race to build the aircraft, Li's spokesman would not commit himself: "Competition is very keen. It's a question of price and quality."

There is a huge worldwide market for this type of short- and medium-haul aircraft. It is thought to be in the region of 2,500 planes by 2015, and worth more than $50 billion. China wants to have a 100-seater aircraft ready by 2001, so time is running short. If it were to choose the European option, "co-operation would start immediately", according to the terms of the agreement.

The European manufacturing consortium is prepared to hold only a minority stake in the joint venture and to allow the aircraft to be assembled in China. According to an expert, "discussions will now focus on the sharing of development costs and the scale of the technology transfer we are prepared to accept."

(April 12/13)

Palestinian police chief knows what he wants

Patrice Claude in Gaza City

COLONEL Mohamed Dahalan, who was arrested 11 times by the Israelis before being deported to Jordan in 1987, is now, at the age of 34, one of the most powerful figures in the Palestine Authority. In June 1994, Yasser Arafat appointed him head of the Gazan "preventive security services", a secret police of several thousand officers that functions rather like its Israeli counterpart, Shin Beth.

Last week the head of Shin Beth, retired admiral Ami Ayalon, visited Dahalan in the autonomous enclave. "He did so in the normal course of duty," Dahalan said. "He had just been appointed and wanted to see how we could restore co-operation between our services, which is currently at a very low ebb."

Co-operation was badly affected by the recent wave of suicide bombs in Israel: "Shin Beth made us scapegoats for their failure to foresee the four last bomb attacks. When they killed Yahya Ayyash on our territory in January, in violation of the accords, I warned them that reprisals by Hamas's armed wing would be extremely violent."

Ayyash, the armed wing's bombmaker, was regarded by Israel as directly responsible for attacks that killed some 50 people in 1994-95. Dahalan, who was then negotiating a truce with a close colleague of Ayyash's, says: "I assured the Israelis that Ayyash was prepared to cease all military action. But they still killed him, for reasons that had more to do with public opinion than with security, and they suffered four bombs by way of reprisal."

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process has since broken down, the occupied and autonomous territories have been blockaded, and there has been a fierce crackdown on activists suspected of Islamist sympathies. Shin Beth and the Israeli army have arrested 1,000 Palestinians, and almost as many are being held by the Palestinian police and security services.

"If necessary we'll destroy Hamas's military structure totally," says Dahalan. "We'll seize all weapons in circulation and arrest the remaining dangerous activists. Then we'll be able to restart negotiations with Hamas's internal political leaders."

Dahalan, like most Palestinians, believes that orders for attacks on Israelis come not from the territories but from Jordan and Syria, now the home of several fundamentalist and other Palestinian leaders deported from their homeland many years ago, who have become more radical in exile. It is also in Amman and Damascus that "those within Hamas who control the secret organisation we have just uncovered are to be found", says Dahalan. He believes about 80 people in Gaza and as many again, if not more, in the West Bank belong to this ultra-secret network.

"We've arrested 70 of them," he says. "They make up the most dangerous network within Hamas. They have killed four Palestinian police officers and a member of the military wing who was in favour of halting the bombing campaign."

Dahalan does not let moral dilemmas get in his way. He has chosen between loyalty to his former fighting comrades and the solution he believes to be the best way for Palestinians to obtain an independent state. "My task is to ensure the continuation of the peace process," he says, "and that's what I'm doing."

"I don't trust Israeli governments, but I know the Israelis well, and I'm convinced they have understood there's no alternative solution to an independent Palestinian state. Shimon Peres must be living in a dream world if he believes the problem can be solved through the Jordanian option, without a Palestinian state . . . Despite the war he has unleashed against us, we want him to win the coming election. For if the Israelis elect [the opposition Likud leader] Netanyahu and his clique, we can say goodbye to the peace process."

(April 10)

View from the Copacabana

The architect Oscar Niemeyer, now 89, talks to **Dominic Dhombres** in Rio de Janeiro

OSCAR NIEMEYER'S studio, on the top floor of an art deco building at the end of Copacabana beach, is reached by an antique lift and a final narrow flight of stairs. It is a huge, light-filled room that affords a view over the whole length of the celebrated beach and the nearby fort of Copacabana. A massive bronze plaque placed on a desk for all to see reads: "A tribute to Oscar Niemeyer from the French Communist Party."

Niemeyer receives visitors in a small windowless room stuffed with books. At 89, with the help of three assistants and a secretary, he is still a practising architect. "I come in at 9am and leave at 9pm. I have lunch here. Friends sometimes drop in for a chat. I've got projects in Brasilia, São Paulo and Portugal. I'm always busy. That's better at my age than worrying about how much time I've got left. I design everything myself, then send my models to my granddaughter, who has an architect's practice."

A few days ago Niemeyer took the wraps off his latest project, a conference centre for media professionals in the seaside town of Marica, 50km north of Rio. It consists of a curved residential building, an auditorium whose concrete roof soars skywards like the prow of a ship, and long ramps for pedestrians like those leading up to the government buildings in Brasilia, for which Niemeyer is best known as an architect.

The centre will be named after the sports journalist João Saldanha. "I'm very attached to the project, because Saldanha was a friend of mine. He was a member of the Communist party like me. He fought very courageously against the military dictatorship in Brazil. He was a great journalist and a good man."

Niemeyer remains a communist, and does not agree with his friend, the writer Jorge Amado, when he is scathing about the time when they were both Stalinists. "I was a member of the Communist party for 46 years. When the party decided to follow the liberal trend of the times and changed its name [in the early eighties], I left it and we recreated a Brazilian Communist party.

"I can't see anything to criticise. When I think of the Soviet communists, I see 70 years of glory. They defeated the Nazis. When we were told communism was dead, I didn't believe a word of it. And look at what's happening now — the only organised party in Russia is the Communist party, and it's probably going to win the next election. There's talk of recreating the Soviet Union. It's unacceptable that such an important country should disappear. No, communism isn't dead."

Niemeyer is not afraid of being labelled a "dinosaur". He remains faithful to the ideals of his youth — "a fraternal Brazil, with neither rich nor poor, which would be completely different from what you see today, all this injustice, all this abject poverty, all this shit. I've always been on the side of the poor, who form the vast majority of people in the world."

Niemeyer's architectural credo has not changed either: architecture has to be the product of the imagination, and it must surprise. "When people come to see me before visiting Brasilia, I tell them: 'You may or may not like it, but you won't be able to claim you've ever seen anything like it before.' Le Corbusier used to explain that architecture was invention. That's how I see my work: creating something different, something new."

The building he remembers with the greatest pleasure is one of his earliest, the church of St Francis at Pampulha, on the outskirts of the city of Belo Horizonte. Visitors are always taken aback by its glass façade and saddle-shaped roof.

NIEMEYER designed it in 1943, when the mayor of Pampulha was Juscelino Kubitschek. The two men have remained close friends ever since. When Kubitschek became president and decided in 1956 to build a new capital city, Brasilia, on Brazil's bleak central plateau, he asked Niemeyer to design its principal government buildings — the Planalto palace, the houses of parliament and the foreign ministry.

After the 1964 military coup Niemeyer could no longer remain in Brazil. He worked in Israel, France, Algeria and Italy. "When I came to Paris, André Malraux, who was then culture minister, helped me a great deal. He made sure that when I went in for architectural competitions I got treated just like French architects. I knew Sartre, who later visited Brasilia and told me how much he liked the supports [along the façade] of the Planalto palace."

Buildings designed by Niemeyer in France include the headquarters of the French Communist party in Paris and the Maison de la Culture in Le Havre. Niemeyer loves Paris. "The atmosphere is different. Here in Brazil you design a project and it's later changed without so much as a by-your-leave. In France architecture is more respected. When the Communist party headquarters were completed, Jacques Duclos asked me if he could keep an old desk he was very fond of in his new office. You'd never get that kind of thing in Brazil."

Niemeyer has had his fair share of disappointments, however. His project for a tower block at La Défense in western Paris, whose structure would have been broken up by hanging gardens, never got beyond the blueprint stage as a result of lack of finance.

He designed Constantine university in Algeria, but was unable to build the mosque he had imagined projecting out to sea in Algiers — an idea that came to him in a flash during the night.

During the seventies Niemeyer gradually spent more and more time in Brazil. In Rio he designed skyscrapers and the Sambadrome, a remarkable succession of stands before which the samba schools parade during their annual carnival.

Despite his great age, Niemeyer is determined to keep on surprising people: "Heidegger wrote somewhere that reason was the enemy of imagination. My architecture is based on imagination, not theory."

(April 2)



Belmondo in Borsalino

Belmondo's complaint

Jean-Michel Frodon

THE French actor Jean-Paul Belmondo blew his top when he learnt that his 67th movie, Désiré (a remake of Sacha Guitry's 1937 film of the same name), was going to be released in only six Paris cinemas and a mere 20 in the whole of France. In newspaper and TV interviews he said he saw this as a sign of the ostracism of homegrown French films by exhibition circuits which were "completely under the thumb of the American film industry".

American movies do indeed corner the lion's share of the French market, with 54 per cent of takings in 1995, as compared with the French cinema's 35 per cent. Disney and Fox have stakes in Gaumont and UGC respectively, the two main distribution circuits in Paris. Multiplexes tend to programme American movies or big-budget French productions, a category into which the independently produced Désiré does not fall.

Complaints by independents about this state of affairs are not entirely supported by the facts. French films like Beaumarchais, Mon Homme and Les Menteurs were all recently released in plenty of Paris cinemas (between 27 and 40).

In his last two movies, Belmondo, who has just celebrated his 63rd birthday and 40 years of film acting, seemed to have lost some of his box-office appeal. And the quality of Désiré, which also stars Fanny Ardant, Jean Yanne, Claude Rich and Béatrice Dalle, may also partly explain the distributors' decision.

Belmondo's anger was compounded by the fact that Désiré was not scheduled to be released in any cinema on the Champs-Elysées, a thoroughfare of symbolic importance to him (he once flew under the Arc de Triomphe).

There was a tiny consolation for Belmondo, though: the distributors of Désiré eventually relented and released it this week in 10, rather than six, Paris cinemas — including one on the Champs-Elysées.

(April 9)

Artist with the eye of a model

Philippe Dagen reviews an exhibition of work by Suzanne Valadon

THE story of Suzanne Valadon is a complicated and edifying one. The early part of her life could have been imagined by J K Huysmans, her later years by François Mauriac. In between there were many surprises and metamorphoses.

Broadly speaking, Valadon's life can be divided into five acts. The first act began on September 23, 1865, when Marie-Clémentine Valadon was born in central France. Her mother was a cleaning woman, her father unknown.

The second act saw Marie-Clémentine (who had by then become Suzanne) working as a professional model for Puvis de Chavannes, Renoir, Jean-Jacques Henner and others during the 1880s. She gave birth to an illegitimate son, Maurice, and began to draw. In the third act, with Degas' help and advice, she exhibited her drawings and etchings. Maurice's Spanish father recognised his son, whose surname became Utrillo.

The fourth act opened in 1909 with Valadon marrying the painter André Utter, who was 20 years her junior, and who encouraged her to give up drawing in favour of painting. From then on, her reputation as an artist grew steadily with the support of galleries and collectors.



Good nudes . . . Suzanne Valadon's The Nets

The fifth and last act occupied the interwar years, when Valadon enjoyed the fruits of her success, which was enhanced by Utrillo's great popularity. Suzanne Valadon died a famous woman on April 7, 1938.

Her life provides a rich vein of inquiry for the sociologist and even the psychoanalyst. The normal roles were reversed when Valadon the model turned into a painter. She was now in command of her models — mostly teenagers of both sexes — a feature which lends her work a strange affinity with Egon Schiele's. She got them to adopt poses that clearly exposed their sexual organs.

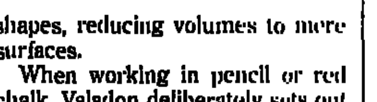
The main lesson she learnt from her years of modelling was that it was vital to hide nothing. Since she hated idealisation in any form and did not set out to appeal to the eye, she spared no ugly or deformed detail.

Valadon's 1931 self-portrait shows an old and bare-breasted woman with a scrawny neck, lined face and cold eyes. Here she has come full circle: the painter is once again the model.

When Valadon steps beyond the confines of this unflattering objectivity, when she stops being ruthless, her painting loses virtually all its interest. Her landscapes display a banal form of Impressionism that is 50 years out of date. Her still lifes are particularly depressing because their composition and motifs invite unfavourable comparisons with Chardin and Courbet.

Fortunately there are the portraits and nudes, which she first drew, then painted. Their raw violence fully justifies the retrospective now on at the Fondation Pierre Gianadda in Martigny, Valadon's first since 1967.

The chief characteristic of her drawings of faces and nudes is the relentless precision of her sinuous black contours. A continuous outline surrounds and separates the shapes, reducing volumes to mere surfaces.



When working in pencil or red chalk, Valadon deliberately sets out to obtain, through suppression and simplification, something approaching a diagram. She uses this device with equal determination when depicting human anatomy or tubs and basins in the bathrooms where her nude women squat or sprawl.

Such subjects, settings and techniques are clear evidence of Degas' influence. When Valadon remains too faithful to her master, she lapses into pastiche. But when she keeps her distance, she forges an individual style that hinges on a simplicity of means. In some ways it foreshadows Neue Sachlichkeit and the work of Dix and Grosz in the twenties.

Valadon the painter is even more disconcerting. Her first attempts at the medium, which she made at the age of 44, are reminiscent of early works by Gauguin, Emile Bernard and Félix Vallotton a quarter of a century earlier. Other influences — Courbet, Renoir and perhaps Matisse — show in her later paintings.

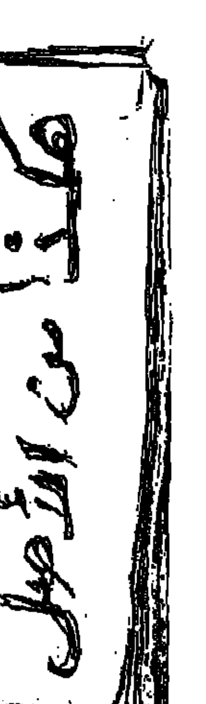
But such derivative work is less arresting than the unappealing, stiff and awkward paintings that make no concessions to craftsmanship or prettiness and bristle with clashing colours.

Her Nu Allongé Sur Un Canapé Rouge is hardly a model of elegance, but its very outrageousness and obsession with detail puts across the carnal presence of the sitter very strongly.

Suzanne Valadon, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny, Switzerland. Until May 27.

(March 30)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

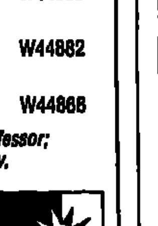


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NATIONAL DIRECTOR: CARE AUSTRALIA

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The current Chief Executive, Tony Eggleton (formerly Secretary-General of CARE International), returned from Brussels in 1995 specifically to take charge of, and consolidate, CARE Australia. With the restructuring phase now near completion, Mr. Eggleton wishes to hand over to a new, permanent National Director by the end of this year.

CARE Australia is fully operational and is one of Australia's foremost developmental and emergency response agencies, providing humanitarian assistance to many parts of the world. With its Head Office in Canberra, CARE Australia operates in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and former Yugoslavia. CARE Australia is a member of the CARE International confederation, the world's biggest emergency relief and development organisation.

Applicants for the National Director's position should have the experience, skills and commitment to manage and lead a dynamic operational, aid and relief organisation. Salary and conditions will be commensurate with the seniority of the position and the experience of the appointee.

Applications (marked confidential) should be lodged with the National Director at CARE Australia, GPO Box 2014, Canberra, ACT, Australia, 2601 by Friday 24 May.

The successful candidate will work alongside Mr Eggleton for a limited transitional period prior to the end of 1996, after which Mr. Eggleton will be joining the Board of CARE Australia.

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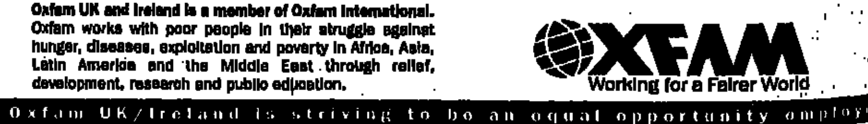
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It is 10 years since Chernobyl, the world's worst environmental disaster. A 40-year-old Irishwoman has raised more money for its victims than the entire United Nations. Adi Roche talks to **Maggie O'Kane**

To Russia with love

AN ICELANDIC millionaire was about to board his private plane on Christmas Eve last year when an airport official came running across the tarmac. There was an urgent call for him. The woman on the other end of the phone was very insistent he should come back into the terminus and take it — she said it was an emergency. The woman on the phone asked the millionaire if he remembered her from a conference in Barcelona. "You told me you had a plane and you could fly it. There are three children near Chernobyl that have to be airlifted for emergency operations on tumours. If you don't do it, they'll die."

The millionaire cancelled Christmas and one of the children Adi Roche saved is now having his nappy changed in front of the fire in her Cork home. Alexei is a perfect 10-month-old boy — except for a hole the size of a golf ball where his eye should have been and where a giant malignant tumour grew instead. And the little mark where the finger growing from his chin was removed.

Adi Roche has raised $9 million for the victims of Chernobyl — more than the entire United Nations, which has managed just $1.5 million, despite an appeal to all the governments of the world. Her latest venture is a $3 million convoy which set off from Dublin this week for the city of Minsk to mark the 10th anniversary of the world's worst environmental disaster. It is thought to be the biggest aid convoy to cross Europe and includes 34 ambulances: Roche will be at the helm.

This summer, 900 children from Chernobyl will arrive in Ireland for a two-week holiday, thanks to the Chernobyl Children's Project, which Roche started. After that, she is considering going to the International Court of Justice in the Hague in order to establish the principle that people classed as environmental refugees should have the right to seek medical treatment outside their own country.

An award-winning documentary she produced, called Black Wind White Land: Living With Chernobyl, has sold in 30 countries, bringing Chernobyl and its victims to public attention again and again. She has written a book, Children Of Chernobyl (HarperCollins, £7.99), and a follow-up TV programme, which focuses on the wider impact of the nuclear disaster on previously ignored areas of western Russia.

Roche, aged 40, was one of a generation of Irish convent girls, raised by nuns who urged them to collect money for the black babies and pray for souls in purgatory. She inherited her social conscience: her great-grandfather lost all his land for voting for a Catholic magistrate; her great-grandmother set up soup kitchens during the potato famine in 1845-55, when a million Irish people died; her father made her help with meals-on-wheels for the elderly in her home town of Clonmel.

In the mid-eighties, Roche had a good job in marketing with Aer Lingus, was — and still is — happily married to music teacher Seán Dunne, and lived in a semi-detached house in Cork, on a street with houses that were filled first with carpets, then with three-piece suites for the front room, then with babies.

Not Adi Roche's house. She was already on another track. On March 27, 1979, her brother's family were evacuated from Three Mile Island after a nuclear accident at the reactor. At around the same time, someone whispered about a plan for a nuclear power station in Ireland at Carnsore Point, Co Wexford, and nice Adi Roche with her smart airlines suit went to an anti-nuclear rally and listened to the founder of the Green Party, Petra Kelly. "She touched a chord in my soul."

Adi Roche seems strangely out of place in the modern world, with her talk of justice, honour and hope. "I am an ordinary person," she says. "I didn't go to university, train for this job. I suppose I believe you can change the world if you want to change yourself and what you do. I want to know why something has happened and how to stop it happening again."

She has spent the past five years going in and out of one of the world's most poisoned patches of land — Chernobyl's Death Valley — to bring aid supplies and organise the evacuation of children for two-week breaks with Irish families. A 1995 report to the UN estimates that 2 million children live in that contaminated zone — an area the size of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In a four-year study of the effects on children, Unicef noted a 38 per cent increase in the numbers with malignant tumours, bone disorders and blood circulation illnesses. Birth rates have fallen by 50 per cent because of fears of birth defects.

Adi Roche is like a clam. She latches on and sucks every molecule of attention. Vodka-drinking, occasional ultra-low tar cigarette smoking, Roche, who sings in a band called Bubbles, runs the Chernobyl Children's Project from the third floor of her Cork home. It is here that Irish children send their sweet money, their Holy Communion money and their confirmation money, to help those other children whose lives were blighted by the events of April 26, 1986.

Adi Roche with one of the children she has helped . . . 'You can change the world if you change yourself and what you do' PHOTO: IRISH TIMES

Having children of her own is, Roche says, no longer an option. "I've been into Death Valley six times now," she says — within a mile of the deadly reactor where the radiation will remain for an estimated 25,000 years. "I wouldn't risk having children because of the danger of deformities. I made the decision about that a long time ago." All her energies are devoted to the children of Chernobyl.

Ireland, which is the largest aid donor in the western world per head of population, is right behind Adi Roche. All the political parties have tried to persuade her to stand for parliament but she has refused them all, preferring to exploit her contacts with each.

She believes the Irish people's response to disaster appeals has something to do with the national psyche. "I feel it goes right back to the famine. People respond to crisis; they always give more than any other Western country because it touches something in our own history and because we remember being helped by people like the American Indians who heard through the Quakers who worked with them that we were starving, and sent aid."

There are bad times for Roche, of course — during these, she escapes along the three-mile road to Rathcooney graveyard outside Cork City, sometimes chalking the problem on the soles of her shoes and "walking it all off". But there are also good times, special moments like when the first 100 children who needed medical attention were flown into Cork airport and the door of the plane opened to the ground staff singing them off.

Alexei, the child she persuaded the Icelandic millionaire to airlift out, spent the first few months of his short life watching from his good right eye as a giant membrane the size of an orange swelled in front of his face and slithered towards his brain. Following an operation, his chances are now good. Roche's sister, Helen, has begun the process of adopting him.

Chernobyl Children's Project, 8 Sidneyville, Bellevue Park, St Luke's, Cork City, Republic of Ireland, tel 00 353 215 06411

CLASSIFIED

Letter from British Columbia Melanie Watts

Settling down

SITTING INSIDE, I look out at the brown landscape, the leafless trees and the still dormant grass. Early morning sun shines down on the Puschkinias, tiny spring bulbs. Soon the 18 acres of hay that stretch out in front of the house will be blooming and I, watery eyed and sneezing, will be wishing for the carbon monoxide filled streets of the city.

It was 11 years ago when we packed up our stereo, records and books to move north to Tomslake. We were only leaving temporarily; a short hiatus meant to establish us in our chosen professions. Then armed with obligatory work experience we could come back to continue our real lives in the city. But somehow our convictions were slowly and gently wooed away.

Local history is defined by one's family place on the geographical map. It is rich in anecdotes held together by a people sharing a common love for the land which gave them their livelihood.

During the summer of 1939 the Sudeten settlers started to arrive. These people, persecuted by Hitler because of their socialist values, were refugees of the Munich agreement. The British government under Chamberlain struck a deal with Hitler and gave them $1,000 to come to Canada.

The establishment of these people was under the supervision of the Canada Colonisation Association, a subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The Peace river area of northern British Columbia was one of the areas set aside for them. A trust fund was established to feed, house and clothe them until they could eke out a living from farming. The Ranch, as it came to be called, grew from 16,000 acres to 23,628 acres. The Sudeten settlers were largely professionals and in a land were winter lasts for the better part of eight months, proficiency in unaccustomed farming tasks must have been difficult to acquire.

Our place is on Krantz road, named, of course, after the family who live at the end. Living as we do 48km from the nearest metropolis, a town called Dawson Creek which has a population of 13,000, our bucolic life centres around the community. At first this showed itself in polite concern for the baby who had asthma. Then as he grew up it became apparent that he was allergic to peanuts; his goody bag at the Christmas party was filled with an extra ration of lollipops to make up for the peanuts which had surreptitiously been removed.

Last winter, on the way back from a shopping trip the car slid on a patch of ice in the driveway and skidded into a snow bank. Since tow trucks are not easy to come by and expensive, I hoisted the groceries on to my shoulders and walked down to the house. When my husband got home I reasoned, our combined strengths would be enough to dislodge it. However, I was astonished half an hour later to see the car sitting in its usual spot next to the fence.

The mystery was solved three weeks later. Tom stopping by on his way to check on some cows, told us that he and his brother Elvin had come over the hill behind me. Spying the car in its difficult position they had simply got out and moved it. Then, requiring no thanks or confirmation of their good deed, they continued on with their business.

ELEVEN YEARS is more than a lifetime for my two children. The seven-year-old, who thinks that school wastes his time, took me to the barn to see the swing he had made out of rope, a piece of wood and baler twine. The twine was necessary, he said, in order to ensure the swing was strong enough to hold his weight. However, he cautioned me against trying it out.

The children attend the elementary school 10km away which currently has 64 students. If life is community-based, the school is its hub. The Parents Association, started in 1948, provided the catalyst for the Sudeten's integration with the existing community. Today, parents raise money for the annual school picnic, grade seven farewell dinner and the Christmas concert. A hot lunch programme was started in 1976. The cooking is done by volunteer mothers and runs from November to the spring break. Somehow the notion that "Small is beautiful" does not seem like such a bad idea after all.



On the buses . . . coaches entering Florence are to be cut by 70 per cent — still leaving 150 a day in a city with a population smaller than Edinburgh's PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

Florence asks culture vultures to book ahead

John Hooper

VISITORS to Florence this summer will have to book in advance to see its art treasures, if the city council gets its way.

The plan forms part of a drastic programme being implemented by Florence's centre-left council to relieve pressure on one of the world's most congested tourist destinations.

On an average day in high season, Florence — with a population smaller than Edinburgh's — receives 50,000 visitors. Some 500 coaches jam into the city, most of them illegally parked. Last week councillors ordered a 70 per cent cut in the number of coaches entering the city's historic centre.

Guido Clemente, the councillor responsible for heritage, said that central government permission was needed for the reservations-only scheme because several galleries and museums — notably the Uffizi — were owned and run by the state. But the go-ahead could be given by the end of the month.

Mr Clemente said he had been prompted to act by 450m queues snaking across the Piazza della Signoria from the Uffizi gallery. "By the time you get in there, you don't want to see anything any more," he said.

The Uffizi houses a collection built up by the Medici rulers between the 16th and 18th centuries, which includes Botticelli's Spring and Birth Of Venus and works by Leonardo da Vinci, Cimabue, Giotto and others.

A car bomb three years ago, which killed five people and injured 50, hit the Uffizi particularly hard, destroying three important 16th century paintings and damaging countless others. Although no one was ever charged with the crime, it was widely believed to be the work of elements in the Italian state unhappy with the progress made by the "clean hands" anti-corruption campaign.

Details of the proposed tourist arrangements have yet to be settled. "For groups, at least, we should be able to have a booking for a particular day at a particular time," Mr Clemente said.

Individuals' tickets would grant right of entry at any time. But they would be bought on entering the city, not at the door.

The scheme also envisages multi-entry passes, giving tourists access to several galleries and museums. "It won't eliminate the problems, but it should improve matters," Mr Clemente said.

His plan highlights the problems faced by cities like Florence from the never-ending rise in "cultural tourists". The prosperity spread by the "tiger" economies of south-east Asia is one factor pushing up numbers, now that worldwide recession has faded.

A Country Diary

Mary Bird

SAUDI ARABIA: We were driving along a track in a long, narrow wadi east of Jizan. Although the track led to a tiny farm at the head of the wadi, we were not going that far. We were there to see the birds that migrate from Africa to this corner of Arabia. The roughness of the track was no deterrent as we expected to be richly rewarded for our efforts.

The wadi was little wider than the track, its steep, rocky sides covered with green shrubs and herbs, many of them in flower. Such an idyllic spot was bound to be full of birds and we saw a wide variety including a flock of Bruce's green pigeons that erupted from a wild fig tree as we passed.

Despite their vivid colouring, grey-green above and brilliant yellow underneath, these birds are completely invisible when roosting in the densely leafy fig trees. Later in the summer, as the figs ripen, the pigeons eat the fruit.

When we stopped the car we saw a Jacobin cuckoo, a striking black and white bird that is a summer breeding visitor to south-western Arabia. This one was being roundly scolded by a bulbul. As Jacobin cuckoos are believed to be parasites in the nests of bulbuls it was hardly surprising the bird was upset.

Walking along and looking about, I realised that the hillside above was alive with hyraxes. These furry, rabbit-sized, tailless relatives of the elephant are not uncommon in the mountainous parts of Arabia but they are extremely shy and hard to spot.

Suddenly, a piercing shriek stopped me in my tracks and within seconds there was not a hyrax to be seen.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHY IS it that lots of people used to be very leftwing when they were young and are now quite rightwing; but hardly anyone goes the other way?

PEOPLE take ideological stances out of either high-minded principle or materialistic self-interest. The former rarely change; they merely sophisticate their views. The latter change when their circumstances do. In recent times most UK citizens have become more prosperous with age; their views become more conservative out of greed and fear. However, in the next decade or so, as more and more elderly people descend into poverty and misery, you will find more and more examples of right-to-left movement. — *D Hartridge, Bristol*

AS PEOPLE get older their stomachs broaden and their minds narrow. — *Kevin Buckley, Kingsley Green, Cheshire*

WERE native Americans' smoke signals myth or fact? If fact, what range of information could they convey?

THE book Indian Sign Language by William Tomkins (Dover) uses as its source the Museum of the American Indian in New York: "Inasmuch as they aimed to transmit secret knowledge, many of the signs were devised privately and to suit a particular purpose or the caprice of the transmitter. There were, however, certain more or less recognised abstract smoke signals. One puff meant 'Attention', two meant 'All's well'. Three puffs of smoke, or three fires in a row, signifies 'Danger', 'Trouble' or a call for help." — *M Brooks, Pittsburgh, USA*

WHERE is the oldest surviving manuscript copy of Plato's Republic? How do we know it is accurate?

APART from papyrus fragments, the earliest surviving text of The Republic is a passage from Book 9 included with a compilation of heterodox Christian texts in 12 papyrus volumes. They were buried in a jar in the late 4th century in Egypt and discovered in 1945. The translation into Coptic is so inept that it was not recognised as the work of Plato until 1974. The volumes are now in the Coptic Museum in Cairo.

The oldest complete Greek text is a 9th century manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Apart from copying errors, textual variations are very few and none significantly alter the sense of what is said. — *Tom Hennell, Manchester*

WHICH is the worst line of poetry in English literature?

MY VOTE goes to Canadian poet and politician Joseph Howe (1804-1873) who wrote in his long narrative poem "Arcadia" (1874): "The gay moose in jocund gambol springs." — *Winnifred M Bogaards, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada*

Any answers?

WHEN was wine first put in bottles and corked and what is the earliest extant bottle of wine still undrunk? —*Andy Richardson, Trinity College, Dublin*

IS IT true that Dick Turpin was buried standing upright. If so, why? —*Jas Bryan, Merseyside*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.

Jungle fever

Howard French in Gabon asks why the Ebola virus is surfacing in African rainforests

THE FOREST is so thick at the edge of Evela, a tiny Gabon settlement, that even the N'tem River, a sizeable Central African waterway, is obscured in the riotous greenery. Asked what lies beyond, a Fang villager shrugs and says "nothing".

From time immemorial, the Fang — one of the Bantu peoples who make up the bulk of Central Africa's population — have considered this area as the edge of the world. But the land beyond has always been home to small groups of Pygmies whose hunting-and-gathering livelihood has remained unchanged through the years. Until now.

The equatorial forest, inhabited by Gabon's Pygmies, is at the heart of Africa's last intact belt of rainforest. But now its 40,000 inhabitants are facing a change of pace far greater than anyone has yet grasped.

A dozen kilometres away, convoys of lumber trucks are bringing material to French-led crews laying paved roads that will open up the area as never before. In the capital, Libreville, and the headquarters of European logging companies, plans are afoot for the forest's exploitation.

At the same time, groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and the World Bank are mounting efforts to inventory the huge catalogue of plant and animal species and identify areas for strict conservation on Gabon's last frontier for commercial forestry.

With its sparse population and dense canopy still intact, international environmental experts say that what happens to this jungle in Gabon will be an important bellwether for Africa's last major belt of relatively pristine rainforest, an area that stretches from the continent's equatorial coast across Gabon and well into the Congo River basin in Zaire.

An American environmentalist, Kathryn Simons, who is studying conservation efforts in Gabon, points to the money that is being spent in places like Brazil — to rescue already devastated forests.

"In Central Africa, where relatively little has been done so far," she says, "we have a unique opportunity to save a major tropical forest *before* it is destroyed."

Although northern Gabon still boasts some of Central Africa's densest remaining woodlands, such as the Minkébé forest, both experts and residents forecast an endangered future. Major logging companies and sawmills have not made it this far, but to the south and east of Evela small operators are already searching for Okoume, the tree species used for plywood. And wildcat gold miners, too, are felling trees, digging pits and dumping mercury and other highly toxic chemicals in the ground or in streams.

A two-week hike away from Evela, along ancient footpaths watched by tree leopards, live Pygmies who have never set eyes on Westerners. But they are now being drawn into the life of modern Africa and its cash economy.

Throughout Gabon, wild game is a delicacy. And in towns like nearby Minvoul, Pygmies wait for city folk or Bantu agriculturists to hire their services as master hunters of the prized forest elephants.

Armed with shotguns and a few shells each, the hunters can spend weeks in a forest teeming with wildlife. The estimated 65,000 elephants are the most prized game in a vast array of potential targets.

Pygmy hunters say their prizes include 10m boa constrictors, antelopes, gorillas, porcupines, boars and monkeys of all kinds. But although the variety is rich, the Pygmies' search for game becomes more difficult each year as the hunting parties multiply.



Under threat . . . Gorillas are being felled by a mysterious affliction

"When we were young men, the hunt was done with arrows," says Omer Amaya, a 58-year-old hunter whose settlement is at the edge of Minvoul. "We could go out for eight or nine hours and come home with a big catch. Nowadays you must walk for at least three days before even seeing anything interesting."

For the hunters, the reason for this increasing scarcity is that their hunting has thinned game populations. "Wherever the barrel of the gun belches, the animals will try to avoid," said Hilarion Mikou. "After a time, the animals will come back."

For environmental experts, however, the picture is more complex. "These forests are still primary forests in their structure, but already they are being exploited," says Marc Languy, a forest expert with the World Wide Fund for Nature. "We have noted a decrease of 80 per cent in chimpanzee populations. If it is true that they can rebound, this is a process that might take 15 or 20 years."

The recent outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in Mayibout, another Bantu outpost in the forest 200km south-east of Evela, has highlighted another possible consequence of forest encroachment. Last year the virus killed 20 people in Gabon and 244 in the Zairean town of Kikwit. Some experts warn that opening the forest, where unidentified animals could be harbouring the disease, could unleash another epidemic. The origins of the virus are not known, but it is presumed to have a natural host in the forest which infects primates. Those who died had recently feasted on chimpanzee meat.

According to scientists at a major international conference in Kinshasa, Zaire, last month, environmental damage to previously pristine forest areas caused this major health threat.

"In Gabon, gold prospectors went deep into the forest, cut down trees and destroyed part of this environment. This gave rise to the emergence of the virus," says Jean-Jacques Muyembe, a Zairean, researching Ebola. Pygmy hunters, meanwhile, say they have recently come across increasing numbers of dead gorillas and chimpanzees felled by a mysterious affliction.

"We've never seen this before," says Mikou. "A big game animal that fears nothing is just dropping dead."

Conservation groups are marshalling an effort to save Gabon's northern forests from the heavy logging taking place elsewhere in this country but tropical wood interests may have the upper hand already.

A Dutch concern known as Wijma has just secured rights to more than 1 million acres of the Minkébé forest. And Gabon's president, Omar Bongo, has roped off another 542,000 acres of virgin forest for logging, to the south of Minkébé.

"This is the last place that good supplies of wood are left in the country," said Pierre Mezui M'Eyie, a government forest inspector based in the provincial capital of Oyem.

"Right now, no one seems to know what kind of wealth there is here, but once the first commercial permits are issued, you will see a flood of applications. Then it is only a matter of time before the Minkébé is destroyed."

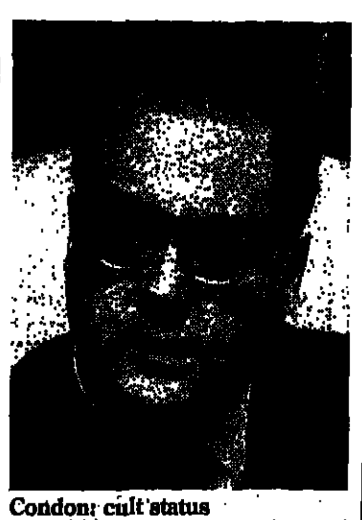
Chronicler of un-American activities

OBITUARY
Richard Condon

BACK IN the late 1950s, Richard Condon's mid-life crisis took tangible form as three duodenal ulcers. At that time Condon, who has died aged 81, was a successful Hollywood publicist. His wife told him that either he did something else or he would chew up his entire intestinal tract. So, in 1958, his first novel, The Oldest Confession, was published. The film rights went within a month.

The film, The Happy Thieves, with Rita Hayworth and Rex Harrison, was dreadful. By then it didn't matter. Condon's second novel, The Manchurian Candidate, published in 1959, imbued the writer with a cult status that persisted through his subsequent career.

Condon produced 24 successful novels in the years that followed, including An Infinity Of Mirrors (1964), Mile High (1969), and Winter Kills (1974); but it was only in the early eighties, with the darkly funny mafia novel Prizzi's Honour — and movie with Jack Nicholson, Kathleen Turner and Anjelica Huston — that the Candidate's long shadow was lifted.



Condon: cult status

The Manchurian Candidate was a child of McCarthyism and the cold war. It dealt with Raymond Shaw, an American prisoner-of-war brainwashed in Korea, who returns to the United States primed for a political assassination. At the time Condon wrote it, the red-baiting senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, had just died and his legacy was an open wound on the American body politic and a presence in his mind.

By 1962, the novel had become a John Frankenheimer-directed film with Laurence Harvey, Angela Lansbury and Frank Sinatra. It was, Condon observed later, the "sweetest translation" ever made between one of his books and the screen.

The Manchurian Candidate, born of fifties' preoccupations, was refracted through the cusp into sixties' film images: witty, scaring, and, as it turned out with JFK's assassination in 1963, coldly prophetic. Where there had been a tortured Laurence Harvey on screen, there was Lee Harvey Oswald — "I'm just a patsy" — in Dallas.

Apart from 18 months in Los Angeles, Condon spent the first 42 years of his life in his native New York. He grew up in Washington Heights, across the East River from Manhattan. It was a melting pot for Germans, Italians and the Irish. Its geographical situation paralleled Condon's development as a writer, an amused, acerbic realist watching the great powers of society at work, but from a distance.

The meeting point between politics, crime and money was an abiding obsession. He saw the political spectacle of American life as an endless series of beautifully decorated river barges. "Around the bend comes the Joe McCarthy barge. Everybody is interested, they applaud, and it slips out of sight downstream. Or you get the Iran-Contra barge, with everyone thrilled and titillated, or the presidential election barge, and that is just wonderful."

Condon, the son of a lawyer and a Brooklyn woman, was the rich kid on the block. His adolescence coincided with both the New Deal and the corrupt politics of the Tammany Hall Democrats. As a 15-year-old, he was paid to herd drunks out of Third Avenue saloons and into the polling booths. Two years later, he was going round the world as a waiter on a cruise line; jobs as a lift operator and hotel clerk followed.

By the late thirties, he was an advertising copywriter. In 1938 he married Evelyn Hunt a "Powers Girl" model and through her he entered the movie business as a publicist. He spent more than five years at Disney followed by 20th Century Fox. He worked, he said, for every studio apart from MGM and Warner.

With his success as a writer, Condon and his family set off across the world. During the ensuing three decades they lived in Mexico, Switzerland, France and Ireland before settling in Dallas in 1980. Between The Manchurian Candidate and Prizzi's Honour his record in the movies was mixed.

The Beatles bought and dropped A Talent For Loving in the mid-sixties. In 1979 Winter Kills, an eminently plausible fantasia on the Kennedy assassination, became a film with Jeff Bridges as the president's brother, and Condon's friend, John Huston, as the murderous family patriarch. It ran into "distribution difficulties" and closed almost as it opened.

The novels continued into the nineties, with The Final Addiction, featuring a character with some faint resemblances to Dan Quayle, in 1991, and Prizzi's Money in 1993.

Condon did not boast any specialist knowledge of the Mafia; anyone who was in American show-business, he believed, would make contacts of a sort. And then there was his experience of New Yorkers during his first four decades: they were people who talked fast, moved fast, thought in terms of sharp angles, wasted fast, and where they went the country followed.

Times have changed since the days of his youth and Tammany Hall, he said recently. "The costuming is so much better. Today they are so much more — well, like beautiful hookers. As for me, I'm for home and mother and all those good qualities." He laughed. "I've just been disillusioned."

Nigel Fountain

Richard Condon, author, born March 18, 1915; died April 9, 1996

At the tornado's eye of human frailty

Goya depicted a terrifying vision of hell on earth. **Adrian Searle** reports from the Prado 250 years after the artist's birth



Man alone . . . Goya's The Execution Of The Defenders Of Madrid PHOTOGRAPH: BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

FRANCISCO de Goya y Lucientes was the fiercest, most tender, most sarcastic and compassionate visual chronicler of his age, of the vexations of his country and of the temperament of his time. The 250th anniversary of the artist's birth on March 30, 1746, at Fuendetodos, near Saragossa, is currently being celebrated at the Prado in Madrid until June 2.

The exhibition of 170 paintings, 128 of which come from the Prado's own collection, is neither the largest devoted to the artist's work nor the most focused.

Yet the show does contain some of Goya's finest works — Bartolome Sureda, with his red-lined top hat, his heavy-lidded, indolent eyes, his throat-throttling cravat; La Marquesa De Pontejos, with her flowers and satins, and her ugly dog; the nude and clothed Majas; The Collossus, striding the Pyrenees as though to protect Spain against Napoleon. Many will be familiar to regular visitors to the Prado.

Complaints about the arrangement of the works and the exhibition's design — which have been rife in the Spanish press — seem like nit-picking. There are omissions one misses sorely and there are also, perhaps, too many of the interminable number of cartoons for tapestries that Goya was obliged to produce, and frequently complained about, for the Royal Tapestry Factory.

But Goya is still Goya, even in these works, with their endless hunters and dogs and bucolic rustics. For all their depictions of fiestas and picnics, games and amusements, these are not always entirely happy scenes — they are seen instead with an eye for the disturbed and uneasy. A girl's face glowing under the filtered afternoon light of her parasol; two cats snarling at one another on a ledge; indolent smokers; a brawl outside an inn — in them all, Goya gives more than his royal patrons might hope or even wish for. So, too, with his royal portraits: Goya invests his subjects not only with regal pomp, but with pomposity, painting their hubris and their stupidity.

The leading painter of the Spanish court, Goya held on to his position throughout the invasions and routs, and the constitutional reversals of the Peninsular wars during which a quarter of a million Spaniards lost their lives. He portrayed the horrors of war and the horrors in his own head. Sometimes the two became indistinguishable.

In 1792 he fell ill, and was left deaf for the rest of his life. He wrote, in a letter to the Academy: "In nature, I can only distinguish luminous and dark bodies, planes that come forward and planes that move away, reliefs and concavities. My eye can never perceive lines or details, and I never think of counting the hairs on a pedestrian's beard or the buttons on his coat. Such trifles never distract my attention. And my brush must never see more or better than me." Goya saw, perhaps, too much, and expressed a desire to give vent to fantasy, to go beyond the constraints of his commissioned works.

Goya witnessed the cataclysms of his age and understood perfectly the contradictions within Spanish society between enlightenment and superstition. Everything he painted or drew he depicted with a complete lack of sentimentality, and yet everything he touched was full of feeling. He was a draughtsman and etcher of prodigious folios, depicting gross and absurd scenes of human folly. He inked and etched and drew prostitutes and pimps, deformed babies, madmen and gluttons, a man in love with his own hernia, a bearded woman suckling her baby. He recorded bestial acts, including the beginnings of the Spanish war of Independence, in 1808, when the citizens rose in revolt against Napoleon's invasion. In painting Execution Of The Defenders Of Madrid, 3rd May 1808, Goya commemorated the mass shootings by the French on the hill of Principe Pio.

He singled out one ordinary man facing the firing squad. Caught in a shock of light, he raises his arms in dismay and terror. It is a gesture of the utmost futility.

GOYA would seem to be the quintessential artist of his time, a painter of court portraits and generals, beautiful women, clerics, doctors, petulant children and their pets. Yet, in a recent essay, the writer Rafael Argullol wrote that "Goya is the vortex of modern painting, right at the tornado's eye".

In 1819 he bought the Quinta del Sorda (the house of the deaf man), just outside Madrid. Already in a kind of internal exile of the soul, his head loud with tinnitus, Goya began decorating the walls with 14 images painted only for himself, for his own delectation. He painted aspects of a kind of hell — a monstrous wild-eyed Saturn eating his children (perhaps an image of Spain, devouring its progeny); two men beating each other with cudgels. He painted nocturnal processions, a witch's sabbath, a floating world of insanities and inane grimaces. "No one before him went so far in the field of grotesque reality," wrote Baudelaire. "All these misshapes, beastly faces and contorted evil grins are profoundly human . . . It is difficult to be precise on the point in which reality and fantasy become confounded. The border between them is drawn and crossed in such a way that it is impossible for us to discover it: the art it conceals is both natural and transcendental."

For Argullol, Goya's hell is a hell not of images but of form, and formlessness. It is not the images themselves that are terrifying, but their plasticity, their near-dissolution into nothingness, blankness, the mud of paint.

In 1823 he bequeathed his house to his grandson, and ended his days in Bordeaux, where he had arrived in 1824 "deaf, old, clumsy and weak, without a word of French, and without a valet", according to a fellow exile. Goya died in 1828. The reverberations and tremors of his work are still felt today.

Verdi drowns out the philistines' boos

OPERA
Tom Sutcliffe

THE wave of booing for director Tim Albery and designer Antony McDonald during curtain calls for Covent Garden's stunning première of Nabucco sadly obscured the magnificence of the performance. I was not a fan of the staging when it was unveiled in Cardiff last year: its bald, modern imagery does not evoke the epic sweep of the tragic biblical story of Babylonian captivity. But it does have the cardinal virtue of focusing on the typically Verdian relationships at the heart of the story (daughter-father, bad and good sisters, contrasting leaders). It also makes the twists of the narrative believable on stage. That is no mean feat, for early Verdi creaks like silent movie editing.

But the knee-jerk impatience of philistine plutocrats in the stalls with what they felt to be an inappropriate look to the show led them be mean-spirited to the singers and conductor. The stalls audience were getting up to leave, when such gripping opera singing and acting should have meant lots more calls.

This was, in fact, a wonderfully exciting event. The debut here of 24-year-old Wladimir Jurowski clearly launched a major new operatic talent and the orchestra played magnificently for him.

Heading the supporting cast was no less than Dennis O'Neill in fine voice as the Hebrew prince Ismaele in love with Nabucco's daughter Fenena (the lovely Leah-Marian Jones), who converts to Judaism.

The central trio, however, raised the show to a special peak. Nina Rautio, punchy and hard-hitting in a red wig, caught Abigaille's tricky character perfectly. Though some top notes were overblown she managed the coloratura with great dispatch. Her timbre's warmth and ambivalence added to the psychological reality.

All three principals fitted into the Albery style with conviction. Ramey as Zaccaria injected an ideal dignity into his larger than life singing, the dark tone never wavering in beauty even under the greatest stress.

But it was Agache's Nabucco that led the performance like a Colossus, his flawless legato singing moulded to every emotional detail, his vocal power and use of the stage irresistibly commanding. The moment when he declares himself a god and demands worship, before immediately being struck with madness, was riveting, and equally compelling was the dramatic scene where Abigaille challenges him about her slave status.

Agache is that rare Verdian treasure, the true *basso cantante*, most humanly believable of all operatic voices. He has now reached full maturity as a vocal and theatrical performer.

The legend of longevity

ROCK
Caroline Sullivan

ONCE a rock star hits 50, the mere fact that he's still breathing guarantees sold-out gigs for the rest of his life. If he also produces a decent record or two, that's a bonus. No wonder 52-year-old Lou Reed, who is both alive and making pretty good albums, excites such interest.

That said, those who made the Empire in west London ring with howls of "Looool" weren't there because his current album, Set The Twilight Reeling, is "pretty good"; they were there to see a legend. Reed is one of the only rock singers about whom that word can be used without hyperbole. Quite apart from forming the Velvet Underground, whose morbid minimalism inspires still, he had intimate knowledge of heroin and bisexuality when such things were shocking. Even now, "Shaved his legs and then he was a she", from his transvestite ditty Walk On The Wild Side, must be one of the most subversive lines ever to make the Top 10.

So Reed turned up (at the uncommonly early time of 8.45pm) and fulfilled the terms of his legend contract. That is, he sang in an uncompromising monotone, kept audience contact to a minimum and set his lip in a "Do you feel lucky, punk?" scowl. It was as it an actor were playing Lou Reed, yet he was fascinating to behold. Even his contradictory appearance — unenviably fuzzy hair and aged face set atop a schoolboy's figure — were oddly starlike. The leather trousers we'll overlook.

"Loooo!" they called again, but he didn't favour them with so much as a sneer as he rattled off Sweet Jane, NYC Man and Dirty Boulevard. If there were an award for Best Opening 10 Minutes, Reed would have walked it. His guitar-playing was sparse and nasty, his band rocked, and blue lights provided a whiff of Velvety decadence. If you stood at the back, you could pretend Reed was still the chilly doyen of the Manhattan demi-monde. It was a heady few minutes, during which even his trousers made sense.

Sadly, it was only to be repeated once, during the drug-addled favourite Waiting For The Man. "Hey, white boy, whatcha doin' uptown?" Reed sang laconically over Fernando Saunders's sluggish bassline, a moment that will live on the next time anyone calls Oasis "dangerous".

As for the rest of it, picture four middle-aged guys playing bar-room rock and that about sums it up. It wasn't that Reed didn't care, but that the songs, most taken from the new LP, weren't up to it. Although his return to rock is a relief after the sombreness of the Magic And Loss album, what seems vibrant on record is less so on stage. The middle section — forgive me, Father — was downright boring.

The set regained ground towards the end with Hookywooky, one of Reed's many paeans to his new girlfriend, performance artist and singer, Laurie Anderson. By Sex With Your Parents, he was back on form, sounding simultaneously disgusted and asleep.

Reed hasn't lost the will; like contemporary Iggy Pop, he's still giving it loads on his own terms. Just don't expect miracles.

The fluffy bunny as unwitting hero

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

THE CHARM of a film about rabbits is not necessarily the rabbits. It is probable that no one in An Obsession With . . . Rabbits (BBC1) had been on television before.

What we have here is driven snow, carrying only the fresh footprints of television virgins. Such people have a shine which is quite different to professional polish.

Tony Gubbins and his lurcher, Daisy, were out rabbiting by night. No, it's not called poaching. Behave. It's called lamping. Daisy reminded me, oddly, of Two Ton Tessie O'Shea, who used to sing: "There a little bit here and a little bit there and it all belongs to me." "This dog", said Tony proudly, "is a grey'ound-Bedlington-grey'ound-collie. She's 25 per cent of four dogs. Quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. Sit down! She's just a smashing dog. Very good at what she was bred for."

You could have threaded Daisy through a needle and darned your socks with her. She had length without breadth like a piece of string and came to a point at both ends.

The rabbit jinked wildly but Daisy seemed able to bend in the middle. Her front half turned back while her back half was still going forward.

The rabbit joined others hanging limply over Tony's arm. He said "I've done daylight 'are coursing. Which I used to gamble a lot. I've raced grey'ounds. But this is It for me. The lamping is the real stuff, if you've got a good dog. A good friend."

Daisy looked up at him on cue. "Which Daisy is, aren't yer?" He pulled her ear. "I don't drink. I don't smoke but if I've got a vice this is it. Love it. Love it. My wife thinks I'm a complete lunatic." Tony and Daisy padded off in a pool of light.

Eileen Early, a comfy sort of woman, sat spinning her rabbits. "What I'm spinning here is white angora rabbit. I've dyed it in my microwave and I'm mixing it with dog. The dog is a border collie that lives next door. I've spun camel, llama, dog, samoyed — well, that's dog, of course. Angora rabbit fur is so soft and warm it will soften up any other hair or give it warmth."

Apparently angora fur in your wellies is a great comfort in winter. Or, if you are a buck rabbit, tights stuffed with female angora fur. The rabbit's reputation is, Eileen admits, well merited.

"But," she said, "they're no worse than humans," and shook all over.

Rabbits came over with the Romans and must often wish they'd gone back with them.

Bang, bang, bang, bang goes the farmer's gun. Or, nowadays, poof. "D'you hear that poof instead of a crack?" asked the farmer. "We're using subsonic ammunition with a softnose bullet and a silencer on the .22 rifle. You have a much better chance of taking out two or three rabbits instead of one."

Gas is even quieter. The exterminators were a husband and wife team. He said, "I'm putting the tablet down the hole now . . . as soon as this is sealed up the moisture will start working on the tablet, giving off a vapour, which will disperse its way down the burrows."

"And put the rabbits to sleep," she said quickly. "And literally do no more than put the rabbits into a deep sleep," he agreed and gave the hole a good whack with his spade.

Everyone who appeared was credited except the medical researcher, who must have felt he'd been brave enough. He has so many rabbits in steel cages, they narrowed in the distance like railway lines. Except for two in plastic boxes, slowly filling with smoke. He was studying asthma and allergies. "It is a growing problem that professional researchers like myself are afraid to do what I'm doing now because they may be a target for some animal rights group."

One rabbit's paws had stopped skidding on the plastic and its eyes were closing. "You can almost consider the rabbit an unwitting hero in this," he said.

Nicholas Southgate produced this refreshing documentary. You have to pat a lot of pets and eat a lot of rabbit pie to make a film like this.

Mind the age gap

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm



Dream on . . . Michel Serrault (M Arnand) gets close to Emmanuelle Béart (Nelly)

ANY FILM which deals with the fetishistic passion of an elderly gentleman for a beautiful but vulnerable young woman has to tread carefully. But Claude Sautet's **Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud** is not Lolita. Nor is the film really about sex at all. The nearest it gets to that is when the kindly, impeccably dressed veteran sits beside the bed in which the object of his desire lies asleep and, without touching her, makes as if to stroke her naked back. This is a film in which nothing, and everything, happens.

Sautet is an extraordinary director, whose command of style has only been celebrated in Britain since Un Coeur En Hiver, but who has been a master of his particular kind of cinema since 1970's Les Choses de la Vie.

With Nelly, he has refined it still further. This is one of his quietest examinations of the French haute bourgeoisie, so you sometimes wonder if anything driven by the plot will disturb its steady progress. It is also one of his most resonant movies, devoid of Claude Chabrol's irony and wicked humour, but possessed of the same powers of observation.

Nelly (Emmanuelle Béart) is a 25-year-old woman who meets Michel Serrault's old friend of her mother's in a café. Impeccably mannered, when he learns that she is deciding to leave her wayward husband, he offers her first money and then a job. He's retired from business and writing a book on his early experiences as a judge in the French colonies. She refuses the money but begins work anyway as his secretary.

The extent of Arnaud's fascination with the young woman only comes into the open when he learns that Vincent, a young editor from his publishing house (Jean-Hughes Anglade), is attracted to her. Nothing has happened, but when the old man asks if she's slept with him, she is furious and says she has. Soon enough, an affair starts. But she refuses to live with her new lover. She is as hooked on the old man's affections as he is on the thought of her.

Sautet, with the aid of an extraordinary performance from Serrault and a luminous one from Béart, orchestrates the progress of this obsessional relationship with the kind of precision that only a director fully in command of both his style and material could muster.

He suggests, without underlining anything, that both participants need the comforting presence of each other — the one in order to rediscover the heady feelings of his youth, the other as a solid presence within a world she cannot easily deal with.

This may seem very little upon which to base a film. But Sautet knows exactly what he is doing, and while skilfully suggesting that this well-heeled world is as reticent as its English equivalent he quietly gives us all the evidence we need of the smouldering emotional undertow behind it.

Even Michel Lonsdale's cameo of the shabby Monsieur Dollabella, trying to blackmail Arnaud by revealing the ruthlessness of his past as a businessman, seems to underline the French insistence that before everything else come social graces.

Serrault's ability to suggest with the merest look or gesture why he is one of France's greatest character actors has never been more evident. The West knows him best as the flouncing Albin in the three Cage Aux Folles movies. Here he increases his stature immeasurably.

Nelly And Monsieur Arnaud will not be a film for everybody. For some, it may seem slow and so even in pace that real drama seems to be carefully and deliberately avoided. But as a quiet, intimate dissection of the emotions it is hard to beat.

IN STIG BJORKMAN'S book In Conversation With Woody Allen, he asks the question: "When you were growing up, was sex more or less a forbidden subject?" Allen replies, "Completely. It was not talked about. Nobody even practised it."

In Mighty Aphrodite, Allen's character Lenny has a certain amount of difficulty with the process, too. A middle-aged, middle-class sportswriter, he conducts himself with propriety throughout, even when faced with so provocative an encouragement as Mira Sorvino's Linda, a porn star and prostitute with the "stage" name of Judy Cum.

Ms Cum turns out to be the mother of his adopted child, a three-year-old genius, and because Lenny has been kind to her, she offers him her services free.

He may be married to Helena Bonham Carter's Amanda. Nevertheless, such an open-hearted piece of generosity is obviously tempting to your average New York nebbish. This one decides instead to match her with Kevin (Michael Rapaport), a slow-witted but pleasant young boxer.

Finally, when Kevin finds out about her past and Amanda, a successful art dealer, announces that she's moving out in order to find out whether she's in love with Peter Weller's Jerry, her rich backer, he allows himself a night's solace with her.

That's all there is to the plot, as slight as any he has given us in recent years. But the film is distinguished by Sorvino's Oscar-winning performance, Bonham Carter's successful transformation into a chain-smoking denizen of Manhattan and Allen's easy fluency in a part he seems to have played a good many times before.

It is also made diverting by the introduction of a masked Greek chorus, led by F Murray Abraham, who turn their attention to Lenny's problems. Unfortunately this device, hilarious to start with, is overused.

Lenny's attempt to educate Linda out of her previous lifestyle could be seen as a mite patronising, but the whole film is pretty good value, and expertly made.

Outsiders looking in

THEATRE
Michael Billington

WARTIME Cairo has long been a magnet for social satirists. But Martin Sherman's Some Sunny Day at London's Hampstead Theatre is more in the nature of an antic, slightly surreal, comedy about the possibility of tapping into one's real feelings while being an outsider in a foreign land.

The setting is a cluttered Cairo flat, beautifully evoked in William Dudley's design, in 1942. Sherman is less concerned with military tactics than with the bizarre and obsessive behaviour of a group of people at a moment of national panic and the possibility of self-discovery in a time of crisis.

Horatio, who works in military propaganda, has fallen for a belly-dancer to the dismay of his wife, Emily, who casts voodoo spells over her. Meanwhile Alec, a stiff-upper-lip young officer, finds himself torn between the desert war and his passion for Robin, a Kiwi journalist. And the duchess, a European émigrée, stakes everything on catching the midnight train to Palestine.

Sherman paints a vivid picture of a manic world, in which everyone is considered a potential spy. But his real point seems to be that, in this topsy-turvy society, people wake up to their true feelings. Just as Horatio is driven by erotic obsession to wife-murder, so Alec acknowledges his gayness and the duchess her guilt over the death of her fellow-Jewish lesbian lover.

At times the comedy becomes excessively whimsical but Sherman suggests that it is only in moments of extremity that people shed their protective exteriors and embrace their true identity.

It is a frenetic but engaging play and is acted to the hilt by an ace cast. Corin Redgrave as Horatio, gives a remarkable display of sweating fixation and sexual possession, while Cheryl Campbell as his vengeful wife is a model of derangement.

Rupert Everett is also ethereally funny and believable as the prophetic journalist who, as he says at one point is more Gertrude than T E Lawrence; and Sara Kestelman lends the Jewish refugee the right gravitas.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

London at War 1939-1945, by Philip Ziegler (Mandarin, £6.99)

LIVELY, readable history from the ground up. Ziegler, chronicler of the establishment, does this so well that it suggests he is ideally suited to this kind of work. Like a true establishment member, though, he has a tin ear for culture, calling Humphrey Jennings "fiercely realistic" (eh?) and labouring under the impression that T S Eliot wrote a poem called "What the Thinker Said".

The Red Notebook, by Paul Auster (Faber, £7.99)

MISCELLANEOUS jottings which show that Auster's world is definitely Austerian: a place of bizarre co-incidences, people making fortuitously whimsical life-changing decisions, and even, in a freakish footnote to the way his New York Trilogy begins, a wrong-number incident where the caller asks Auster if he could speak to one of his (Auster's) fictional characters.

Behind Closed Doors, by Alina Reyes, trans David Watson (Phoenix, £5.99)

HERE WE are: interactive fiction. Even better: dirty interactive fiction. The book can be read from either end, depending on which gender you want your narrator to be; each episode of poking or sucking or God knows what ends with an instruction to go to one chapter ("door") or another. And more of the same, although this is very definitely Art, and some of it is actually quite disturbing. But whether we are at the birth of a brave new art form is a moot point.

Multilingualism, by John Edwards (Penguin, £7.99)

THERE ARE about 200 countries in the world, and 5,000 or so languages which have to be squeezed into them all. This is the kind of fact which largely monoglot Brits tend to be uncomfortable with: that all over the world there are people who rub along with four or five languages at once. Fascinating stuff. Shed a tear for Oubykh, with, in 1985, one solitary speaker: 82 consonants in his language, and three vowels.

The Blue Suit, by Richard Rayner (Picador, £5.99)

A NEW genre has sprung up: the young man's autobiography written before said young man has achieved anything. It can be better than writing novels, though, and Rayner, in any case, has been fictionalising quite a lot already: lying, stealing, forging . . . it's all recorded here in this compelling, extraordinary confession. Can it be true? Others have impugned his veracity, and suggested he would otherwise be in the nick by now. I side with his mother: "You really did those things? Oooooh. You little sod."

Some enchanted evening

Laura Cumming

Slowness
by Milan Kundera
trans Linda Asher
Faber 132pp £12.99

MILAN KUNDERA'S new novel is set in the park of a French chateau, "a little plot of walks in the midst of a vast network of highways". Since Kundera likes to establish an early contract with the reader, he tenders this emblem of intent in the very first paragraph. But his book is so cunningly constructed and so elegantly written that you hardly notice the extent of its intellectual map until the final page. By then, you have spent a midsummer's night in the park with two pairs of hopeful lovers and everything seems to have passed in some enchanted dream.

Pleasure is in fact Kundera's theme, but his variations are as philosophical as ever. Follow the lovers down a twilight avenue and you glide through a critique of Epicurus (pleasure as the absence of pain: too safe, too melancholy). Follow them to a moonlit pool and you pass through the Enlightenment via Liaisons Dangereuses (pleasure as sexual conquest: too competitive, too public). Soon you are on the open highway with Kundera — he names himself as your guide — speeding towards the book's seductive argument: the principle of slowness.

Kundera introduces this concept with lightsome charm. Motoring down to the chateau with his wife, he is persecuted by the futile impatience of the man in the car behind. Beside the man sits a woman. "Why doesn't the man tell her something funny?" muses Kundera. "Why doesn't he put his hand on her knee?" Instead of relishing the potential for intimacy, the driver loses himself completely to the inanity of mechanical speed. Slowness is equated here with humanity, with humour, conversation, sex. It is a measurement of pleasure and even wisdom. As Kundera's old Czech proverb has it, life's amblers are "gazing at God's windows".

In the past, Kundera has made a feature out of the abrupt splicing of essay and fiction. Here, they are in easy harmony. Kundera discusses ideas, offers amusing anecdotes, as though conducting a leisurely conversation over dinner with the reader. Casually recommending a French 18th century novella, he begins to recount its tale of two lovers, restricted by circumstance to a single night at the chateau. His prose becomes infused with their languid eroticism, secret pleasure taken slowly to preserve it in memory. Pondering the relationship between haste and forgetfulness, Kundera is then reminded of his young friend Vincent, who pursues sex in order to suppress the past and stockpile boasts for the future. His night at the chateau concludes in farce: a frantic pool-side coition interrupted by the sudden arrival of spectators. Vincent's greed for public status is appositely stymied.

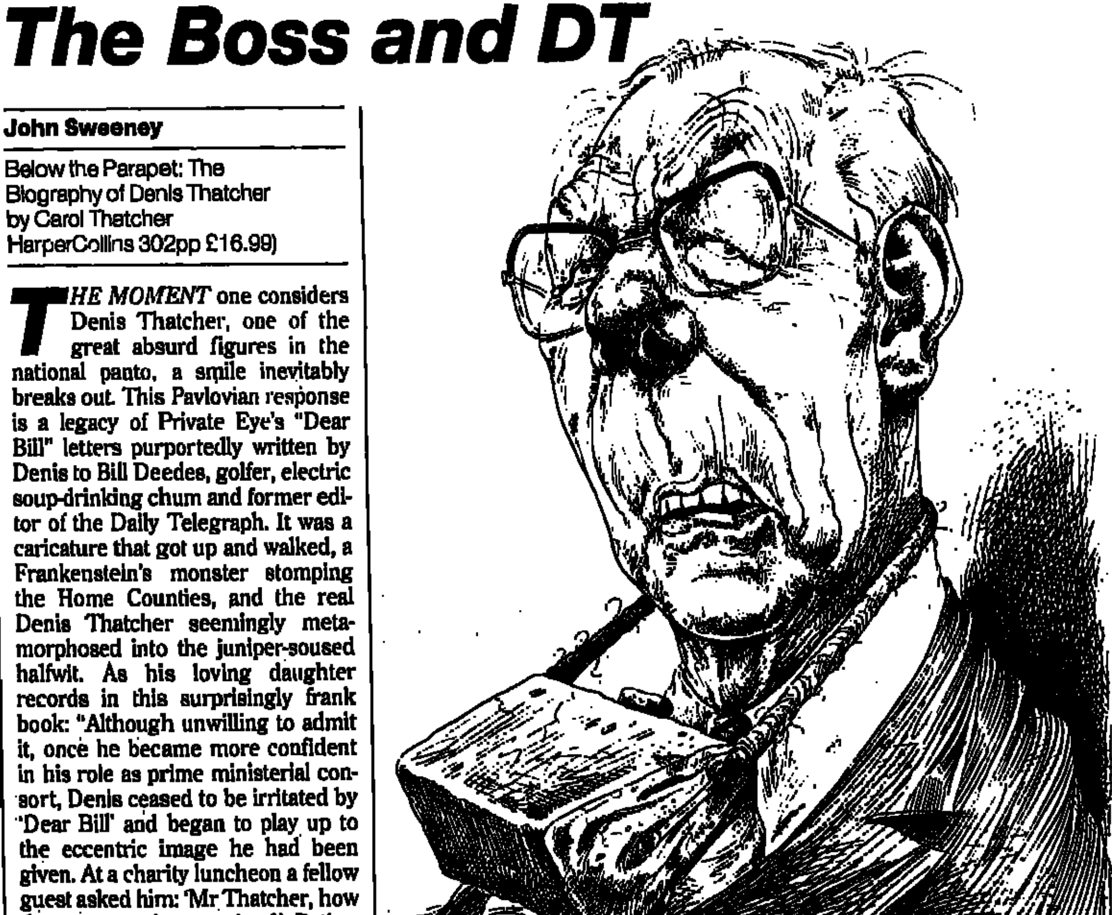
In his adroit commentary on Liaisons Dangereuses, Kundera remarks that "nothing in the novel stays secret: everyone seems to live inside an enormous resonating seashell". Slowness is also something of a seashell, a constant reverberation of ideas back and forth between the centuries. Discretion, the better part of pleasure in the 18th century, is ousted by exhibitionism in the 20th century. The speeding driver has his counterpart in the media "dancer", the public figure who desires "to take over the stage so as to beam forth his self". The French intellectual Berck, for example, who joins his enemy Duberques for a televised lunch with Aids patients. Duberques ostentatiously kisses a patient full on the mouth. Berck is challenged. "Hasty imitation would add still greater lustre to the other man's glory." The cameras record his hesitation. "Those seconds cost him dearly . . . the whole of France read on his face the phases of his uncertainty, and sniggered."

Halfway through the novel, Mrs Kundera chides her husband for being too jocular: "seriousness keeps you safe". In fact, the book is his funniest, rippling with philosophical jokes and satirical sketches — Kissinger, for example, as the dancer's perfect pin-up. And its seriousness is often lightly conveyed. The final image is of the 18th century lover meditating on the night's fleeting happiness as his chaise departs slowly through the breaking dawn. In the tranquil poise of his mind lies the true source of pleasure.

The meaning of Kundera's brief novel is expressed in that moment. So is his achievement: infinite riches in a little room.

The Boss and DT





John Sweeney

Below the Parapet: The Biography of Denis Thatcher
by Carol Thatcher
HarperCollins 302pp £16.99)

THE MOMENT one considers Denis Thatcher, one of the great absurd figures in the national panto, a smile inevitably breaks out. This Pavlovian response is a legacy of Private Eye's "Dear Bill" letters purportedly written by Denis to Bill Deedes, golfer, electric soup-drinking chum and former editor of the Daily Telegraph. It was a caricature that got up and walked, a Frankenstein's monster stomping the Home Counties, and the real Denis Thatcher seemingly metamorphosed into the juniper-soused halfwit. As his loving daughter records in this surprisingly frank book: "Although unwilling to admit it, once he became more confident in his role as prime ministerial consort, Denis ceased to be irritated by 'Dear Bill' and began to play up to the eccentric image he had been given. At a charity luncheon a fellow guest asked him: 'Mr Thatcher, how do you spend your time?' Rather than banging on nobly about good works, Denis declared, 'Well, when I'm not completely pissed I like to play a lot of golf'."

And magnificently, the joke against himself is all true. Denis does, it seems, like drinking a lot and he does like playing golf with his cronies. The creators of "Dear Bill" — Richard Ingrams, John Wells and the late, great Peter Cook — were once sent a photograph of Denis quaffing champagne in the Twickenham car park. Carol writes: "The 'Dear Bill' team felt like cheering because he was surrounded by a group who looked exactly like the people they had invented."

Less happy was the night when The Boss+DT (as Downing Street used to log his invites to official beanos) went to see the play of the "Dear Bill" letters, Anyone for Denis? Carol notes that Tim Bell — the PM's bouffant-haired PR guru — describes the night as "one of the greatest mistakes of his life".

A party at Number Ten followed, when our hero unbuttoned what he really felt about the world to Nick Farrell, an actor who had played a policeman on stage. John Wells witnessed the meeting: "Clearly Denis latched on to the idea that he [Farrell] was indeed a policeman. Denis said: "You get fuzzy wuzzies going on the rampage down in Brixton, and you people [the police] sort it out in no time at all, but have you noticed one thing? When peace is restored there are no television cameras in sight. I'll tell you why — because the media are closet pinkos." — The satirist was dumbfounded: *echt* Denis was more outlandish than the cartoon.

But the figure that emerges from Carol's book is more complex, more contradictory and, in many ways, sadder than the figment. Denis has never been an idiot but he has never quite fulfilled his ambitions. Although he won a military MBE and was mentioned in dispatches twice, he had a boring war, pottering around Sicily after it had been taken and passing the final stretch in Marseille. Shortly after Margaret became Leader of the Opposition, the News of the World started sniffing around the story of the first Mrs Thatcher, Denis's wartime love, Margot Kempson; the marriage had collapsed in peacetime. While researching the book, Carol visited Kempson, now Lady Hickman. "When I mentioned to Denis that I'd been to see Margot, he paused and looked rather misty-eyed. 'Is she still incredibly beautiful?' he asked."

Denis had a good business mind, so they say, but his family firm, which flogged arsenic-flavoured sheepdip round the world, was gobbled up by Castrol, which itself was taken over by Burmah. Each time Denis managed to land upright in the boardroom, but only as an acolyte.

He hated the attention which flowed from his wife's public life. He turned to sport, refereeing rugby games. He appears to have been good at it, but even here he never made the top, international level. Once he went to see his boy Mark play at Harrow: "He left at half-time, telling one of the masters, 'God and all the angels couldn't turn my son into a rugby football player'." The frostiness between father and son comes icily off the page like a Siberian wind; the description of the scene at Heathrow when Mark returns from getting lost in the Sahara to be hissed at by Denis "through clenched teeth" is a minor comic gem.

Below The Parapet is far better than one expects: honest, full of sharp narrative, challenging even Alan Clark's Diaries as the best book on the Thatcher years. Carol — out of honesty? Lack of judgment? Revenge? — reveals too many embarrassing family secrets, which point up the functional nature of her dad's second marriage and the ways in which Margaret Thatcher's cold ambition crimped family life. The cruellest cut comes in a quote from Nanny Barbara. Denis, she recalls, "was very good at remembering to wave up at the nursery window as he left for work, whereas Mrs Thatcher, whose mind was already on her job, would forget." Not many laughs there.
— *The Observer*

Roddy Doyle . . . exploring the world of domestic violence

Yours sadistically

Irish writer Roddy Doyle talks to **Linda Grant** about his latest novel

RODDY DOYLE, widely (though he says unfairly) regarded as one of literature's lads, has written a novel about an alcoholic woman, physically abused by her husband, with a junkie son who lives away from home on a dump estate somewhere.

Why wasn't The Woman Who Walked Into Doors (Jonathan Cape, £14.99) written by a woman rather than a male author who is noted for having found an audience among men who don't normally read.

It may be that women are not writing such books, wary of being summed up, by the armies of barely pubescent male critics who swarm over review pages, as a "women's issues" novelist, fixated on "victim feminism". Or that they are but published by Virago and dismissed by those same reviewers as worthy, sluggish and hormonal rather than "lean and sexy", which the back jacket of Doyle's book proclaims.

Odd, isn't it, how male angst is cool, while female depression is what you get when you take Valium instead of amyl nitrate? It is unfair to address any of this to Doyle himself, who has simply written the book he wanted to write and go hang the rest of the world.

Paula began as a character in his television drama series The Family. He felt "she had an awful lot more she could say". Her story is set in Dublin, but beaten women are the same everywhere. Doyle's brilliance is in his depiction of her adolescence in the seventies, of working-class boys and girls being sent to crap schools with crap teachers. At 11, Paula believes you can do what you want and that people will love you for it; at 13, life closes down as the ovaries begin production, sending the first eggs down the assembly line, pushing out the breasts and the hips. Now a girl appears who is no more than erogenous zones walking around on a pair of erogenous zones.

"Where I grew up — and probably everywhere else — you were either a slut or a tight bitch, one or another if you were a girl — and usually before you were 13," Doyle's Paula tells us. "You didn't have to do anything to be a slut. If you were good-looking; if you grew up fast. If you had a sexy walk; if you had clean hair, if you had dirty hair. If you wore platform shoes, and if you didn't. Anything could get you called a slut."

Once a girl had accepted the inevitability of her fate — that in order not to be a slut she had to be a genius-level brain or a nun — she set about becoming a ride, sexually bold, available and competent. In one of the book's most edgily funny passages, Paula masturbates a boy in the back of the class and gains the awed respect of her fellow pupils. What was it like, she is asked. "Lovely," she replies. Oh yeah? In what way?

It was a chore for Doyle, writing with Paula's voice, though an enjoyable one. "There were times when I used to measure a successful day with the number of pages I could write," he says. "I couldn't do that with Paula. Granted there were days when I could get a lot done, but there were others when a paragraph seemed a reasonably good day's work."

The difficulty Doyle is going to face is that his novel will be judged as a textbook on everything from Irish education to alcoholism. Already one Irish critic has made the carping point that he has never heard of a case of back-row masturbation in Irish schools, as if a writer of fiction were not allowed to make anything up. Doyle consulted various texts on domestic violence and was stunned not by what he had got wrong but by sadism he could not have imagined.

"One thing that really floored me was a husband hitting a wife when she was pregnant so she lost the baby, the sheer evil of it. The first time Charlo hits Paula, he does it to shut her up and it works so he does it again and it goes beyond that and becomes enjoyment, his creativity goes into it."

When The Family was shown on Irish television, viewers complained that Paula deserved what she got because she was an idiot to have married Charlo in the first place. Doyle says that's not how such marriages work. "I don't think there's any doubt that he loved her when they got married. I wanted to get across that she wasn't making a mistake when she married him, she wasn't fooled. She was in love with him and he was in love with her. They were an ideal couple, they followed a tradition that's been going on for thousands of years, they got married. The vast majority of men don't hit their wives until they're married. Charlo has that violent nature in him. In the first heady days, there's no need for him to use it, but then there's the more mundane reality of marriage and she gets pregnant and from his point of view less attractive and he can't handle it any more and she doesn't have his dinner ready and won't do what she's told, and then he hits out at her."

Although the book feels right as an account of women's perception of male violence, it is the demands of literature that allow Paula to triumph. In the end she strikes back; he leaves and she hears no more of him until the police knock on the door to tell her that he is dead. In real life, men are not so obedient.

Doyle thinks there's not a household in Ireland that doesn't have a Roddy Doyle book in it somewhere. This one will be hard to avoid. The real impact, of course, will be if it were transferred to screen: "But if you make it into a film, you've got the neutral camera instead of her voice, so that would change it immediately. No, it's better left as a book."

For women writers, however, it is a bitter irony that what may be the most accessible novel on domestic violence has been written by a man who once appeared on Fantasy Football League.

Thrillers Chris Petit

Walking Back the Cat, by Robert Littell (Faber, £14.99)

IN A class of his own. Littell's title refers to retracing an operation to see what's gone wrong, why a sleeper KGB assassin should be activated to kill a bunch of Indians whose land has the only casino for miles around. A world of multiple-bluff, traceless men, beguiling gaps, Mafia-CIA-KGB overlaps, and — Littell's ultimate joy — the sleight of hand by which a whole network is penetrated and redirected, and is none the wiser. Neat.

Dead Man's Dance, by Robert Ferrigno (Simon & Schuster, £15.99)

HIP, alternative reporter and hipper Japanese photographer lover (this is southern California) query the death of a judge — apparently killed by neo-Nazis — who is also the reporter's estranged stepfather, which prompts questions of, uh, identity. Ferrigno is nearly very good. He writes smart prose, but three novels down the slide the good guys still don't match the hoods. Epicene Rick, killer hairdresser, takes the cake, giggling right up to his big exit.

Violetta, by Pieke Biermann (Serpent's Tail, £8.99)

BIERMANN, once a prostitute, casts a beady eye on the urban under-belly. Her radical, wide-angle take on Berlin (still with its Wall intact, just) shows a city used to the brink, and a gallery of grotesques — fascists, racial killers, bigots — after George Grosz. A jittery, multi-layered plot relies less on narrative drive than patterns of random action, connected by the concrete facts of the city, its times, places and weather.

Nathan's Run, by John Gilstrap (Little Brown, £12.99)

THE kid-on-the-lam plot recalls Grisham's The Client, the mentor this time a radio phone-in hostess. Cute Nathan, 12 pushing 40, gets put through a predictable manhunt wringer fleeing a murder rap; pre-teen sex is the only thing missing in this cynical by-the-numbers first novel.

Armed and Dangerous, by James Kennedy (Heinemann, £10)

A TIMELY breaking-the-ceasefire thriller. Renegade IRA unit busts out of prison with the aim of causing maximum damage, pursued by an uneasy alliance of spooks and IRA doves. Cut to a London of strange anomalies — The Big Issue sold door to door? — that lend a quirky, surreal air to what would otherwise appear old-fashioned.

Chess Leonard Barden

THE ANNUAL Vereingde Spaarbank tournament in Amsterdam was the scene of Garry Kasparov's worst setback of 1995. He lost twice in six rounds, failed to win the event, and then excused himself from the prizegiving.

VSB 1996 this month, with a prize fund of $60,000 was, seemingly, an arena for Kasparov to exorcise bad memories. But he began with another humiliating loss.

Topalov-Kasparov, Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bc4 e6 7 Bb3 Nbd7 8 f4 Nc5 9 0-0 Ncxe4 Kasparov had ample experience of 6 Bc4 in his 1993 match with Nigel Short. **10 Nxe4 Nxe4 11 f5 e5 12 Qh5 Qe7?** Short did his homework before playing Topalov two rounds later, and produced 12 . . . d5! 13 Re1 Bc5 14 Rxe4 Bxd4+ 15 Be3 0-0 16 Rxd4 exd4, when Black went on to win.

13 Qf3 Luring the black queen to e7 means that White can now counter exd4 by 14 Re1. **Nc5 14 Nc6 Qc7** Not bxc6 15 Qxc6+ and Qxa8. **15 Bd5 a5?** Kasparov plans to trap the knight, but the sturdy horse stays alive and proceeds to wreak havoc in the black camp. 15 . . . Bd7 is better, when the tactic 16 f6 Bxc6 17 fxg7 Bxg7 18 Bxf7+ Kd8 19 Qg4 Bf8 is repulsed, while 16 Nb4 looks doubtful value for White's sacrificed pawn.

16 Bg5! Ra6 f6 crashes to 17 Bxf6 gxf6 18 Qh5+ and mates. **17 Nd8** A picturesque move to play against the world champion when you are hardly out of the opening. **f6 18 Nf7 Rg8 19 Be3 g6 20 Ng5 Rg7 21 fxg6 Rxg6** A desperate measure. Perhaps earlier, Kasparov planned hxg6 22 Qxf6 Qe7, returning the pawn, but then noticed 23 Nh7! Qxf6(Rxh7 24 Qxg6+ Kd8 25 Bg5) 24 Nxf6+ Kd8 25 Bh6 winning at least the exchange.

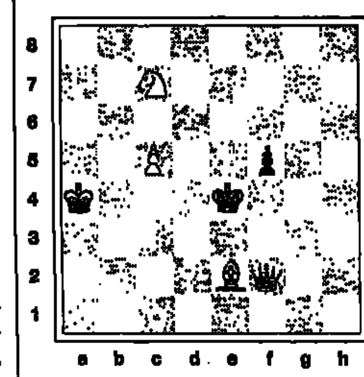
22 Bf7+ Qxf7 23 Nxf7 Kxf7 24 Bxc5 dxc5 25 Rad1 Be7 26 Rd5 Bg4 27 Qe4 Kg7 28 Rfd1! Bxd1 29 Rxd1 Returning some material, White eliminates all counterplay. Later Topalov exchanged rooks, infiltrated his king and queen into the black position, then potted black pawns until Kasparov resigned at move 66.

Nigel Short, who often begins badly, also lost in the first round when his slow opening 6 . . . a6 and 10 . . . Nf8 allowed the French No 1 to work up a quick attack. 26 Nxd5! is decisive: Short cannot capture 28 . . . Qxd5 because of 29 Nxg6+ hxg6 30 Qxg6.

Lautier-Short, Queen's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 a3 Bb7 5 Nc3 d5 6 Qc2 a6 7 cxd5 exd5 8 g3 Nbd7 9 Bf4 Be7 10 Bg2 Nf8 11 Ne5 Ne6 12 Qa4+ Kf8 13 Rd1 Nxf4 14 gxf4 g6 15 Qb3 Kg7 16 Bf3 Rf8 17 h4 Rb8 18 h5 c5 19 e3 Qd6 20 Rg1 Qe6 21 hxg6 fxg6 22 Qc2 Kh8 23 Rh1 Kg7 24 Rg1 Kh8 25 dxc5 bxc5 26 Nxd5! Bxd5 27 Bxd5 Nxd5 28 Rxd5 Rf5 29 Rd2 g5 30 Nc6 Rbf8 31 Nxe7 Qxe7 32 Qc3+ Kg8 33 Qc4+ R8f7 34 Rd5 Kf8 35 Rxg5 Rxf4 36 Qxa6 Rxf2 37 Qc8+ Qe8 38 Rg8+ Resigns.

No 2417



White mates in three moves, against any defence. An easy-looking problem which took me half an hour to solve. Can you do better?

No 2416: 1 Nb2. If Kxd5 2 Nc4 and if Kxc4 3 Bg8, or Kc6 3 Be4, or Ke6 3 Nc7. If 1 . . . Ke5 2 Nc7 Kd6 3 Bg3 or Kf4 3 Nxd3.

ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

Call of the crane

Mark Cocker

THE MAGNIFICENT birds I went to see recently enjoy an almost sacred status in oriental mythology. To the Japanese they are symbols of longevity, and to the Indians emblems of devotional love, while in some Chinese myths they carry the souls of the dead to paradise.

For me these associations strike a resonant chord, and whenever I go to watch Britain's only flock as they come to their evening roost, it seems an experience akin to a formal rite.

When I first arrived at the wildest, most easterly of the Norfolk Broads, formations of geese were circling overhead in search of open fields where they would be safe during the hours of darkness. Marsh and hen harriers then drifted in to hunt over the reedbeds before settling on their platforms within the vegetation. An owl emerged and quartered the fields, while smaller birds roosting in bushes around me seemed to be caught in a last convulsion of alarm, before the darkness smothered their fears and they lapsed into silence. The moon and stars were soon showing.

In fact, it was so dark and the six birds were flying so low over the bushes I could barely make them out. But in flight Common Cranes are unmistakable. One call almost feel the inrush of air following the long deliberate uplift of their massive wings.

After only a few dozen of these powerful rhythmic strokes, they pitched down silently into the heart of the marsh. Lasting just a few seconds, it was a typical sighting and once they disappeared completely I could only imagine what followed.

For as cranes land, especially in spring, they leap and "dance" and the males raise their heads skywards to deliver a trumpeting call.

Long convolutions in the trachea enable them to produce an extremely powerful note. And it was this sound, both haunting and triumphant as it filled the entire landscape, which signalled the climax of my visit to see them.

Of all Britain's breeding birds, cranes can surely boast the most superlatives. I can probably best indicate their size by revealing, with a degree of shame, that it is the only bird I have ever mistaken for a sheep. It is easily the tallest, although its two-and-a-half-metre wingspan is even more impressive and outstrips the largest eagle. Since that resounding bugle note can carry over six kilometres, I suspect it also) qualifies as the loudest species.

A POPULATION of 1-3 pairs makes it a national rarity, which even has the added allure of a mystery. Although cranes were once widespread in Britain, the drainage of wetland habitats eliminated them as breeding birds in the 17th century. Stray individuals have continued to occur, but these are normally Scandinavian migrants on their way to wintering areas in France and Spain. In fact, across their entire Eurasian range, all cranes make seasonal movements to and from the northern breeding areas.

So it was a source of some confusion when three birds took up permanent residence in the Broads in 1979. Since then they have hardly left the region and have never travelled farther than southern England.

The apparent lack of a true migratory instinct led to speculation that they were originally birds released from captivity.

However, there is a possibility that since Norfolk is midway between their normal wintering and summering grounds, this region can provide their year-round requirements.

Whatever their true origins, nobody genuinely interested in wildlife is disappointed that they have gradually increased to a total of nine. Nor would they wish anything for this precarious Norfolk toehold than it become a secure population.

Quick crossword no. 310

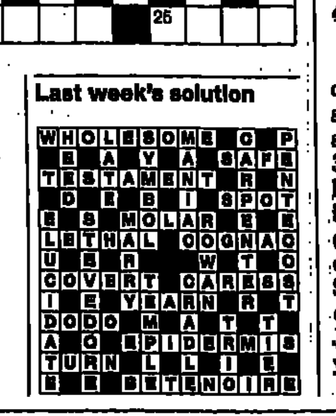
Across

1 Chap — found walking along the coast (4)
3 Incident (8)
9 Atomic (7)
10 Concur (5)
11 Weird (5)
12 Rough? That's odd (6)
14 Procrastinated (6,3,4)
17 Meat pin (6)
19 Imprecise (5)
22 Prize (5)
23 Perplex (7)
24 Egg and fish dish (8)
25 Slough — outbuilding (4)

Down

1 Disdain (8)
2 Clergyman (5)
4 Perimeter (13)
5 Proverb (5)
6 Jewish inhabitant of Holy Land (7)
7 Want (4)
8 Ebb (6)
13 Dead (8)
15 Clumsy (7)
16 Chasm (6)
18 Jam — a slice of cake (5)
20 Canyon (5)
21 Rifle — fire (4)

Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

BRIDGE TODAY, a US magazine, invited its readers to submit real-life deals that might have been played by Victor Mollo's Rueful Rabbit. The Rabbit was a lovable character who, though hopelessly incompetent, contrived to make hugely successful bids and played entirely by accident. The competition ran for a year, and attracted several excellent deals. I like this one, which won second prize.

Take the West hand and select your opening lead after South, your right-hand opponent, has opened 3NT:

♠J943 ♥Q104 ♦82 ♣A854

The usual meaning of a 3NT opening is a long, solid minor suit with perhaps a trick on the side — the so-called "Gambling 3NT" opening. The standard lead against such an opening bid is an ace, to have a look at dummy and gauge where the opponents' weak spot may be. So if you selected the ace of clubs, as Nick Straguzzi of New Jersey did, congratulations — you have found the expert lead.

Unfortunately, you have also led the only card in your hand that will allow South to make his contract! This — and you may not believe it at first — was the full deal:

North
♠ K 6 5
♥ A 7 6
♦ K Q J 10 9 4
♣ 6

West
♠ J 9 4 3
♥ Q 10 4
♦ 8 2
♣ A 8 5 4

East
♠ A 10 7
♥ J 8 5 2
♦ 6 3
♣ K Q 10 9

South
♠ Q 8 2
♥ K 9 3
♦ A 7 5
♣ J 7 3 2

and this was the bidding:

South	West	North	East
3NT	No	No	No

After the ace of clubs lead, there was no way in which the defenders could come to more than three club tricks and a spade. As a test of your imagination, try to think what might have prompted South to make so extraordinary an opening bid.

Well, the explanation is that South was a true Rueful Rabbit, with little experience of the tournament game. His partner, whom he had met just before the start of the competition, was a more experienced practitioner who had made the fatal mistake of trying to persuade South to play one or two conventions. Rabbits love conventions, and South was no exception. He listened avidly as the 3NT opening was explained to him, and lost no opportunity to put his new-found knowledge into practice.

"What on earth did you bid on?" demanded North after the play was over.

"It was the Gambling 3NT, just like you told me!" replied South.

"I never told you to open 3NT on a hand like that," said North.

"Yes, you did," retorted South. "You said it showed a hand with nine or 10 points — I even had a maximum!"

There was a pause. "Nine or 10 points, yes," said North, eventually. "But I meant all in the same suit!"

Football Premiership: Southampton 3 Manchester United 1

Saints give United an almighty shock

Martin Thorpe

THIS was the weekend that football lovers experienced the problems of premature evaluation, a psychological weakness afflicting those who crown a team as champions before they have actually won the title. Or lost it.

In 1992 United's late jitters let in Leeds, the following year Villa let in United, in 1994 Blackburn almost trumped United, and last season United nearly overhauled Blackburn.

But history is ignored. Hence a title run-in this season that reads like the plot of a crime thriller: first everyone was convinced that Newcastle had done it, then all the evidence pointed to Manchester United. Now nobody knows what to think — except that there are bound to be more twists to come.

The blame for this latest one lies largely with the author of the season's shock result — Dave Merrington, a Geordie-born lay preacher with a pulpit zeal who whipped up Southampton into such a high state of self-belief that they beat arguably the best team in the country.

His tactic was dubious for a man of God, denying United two staples of creation, time and space. But it was the obvious way to succeed. Such constricting tactics are a prime and understandable piece of the armoury used by sides fighting the foe of relegation and are an irritating test of the true quality of leading teams. Last Saturday United were left with, literally, nowhere to turn.

Liverpool's championship hopes were all but ended by a similar ploy from similar opposition at relegation-threatened Coventry over Easter, and Saturday was not the first time that United have been troubled by the problem. Only a late Cantona equaliser salvaged a recent point at spirited QPR.

What made the Saints' performance so devastating was that they also got behind the ball in numbers, attacked mob-handed, passed with impressive slickness and tucked away their chances. Not even Cantona could bail out United this time.

But Ferguson's team did not help themselves. Perhaps after an unbeaten run of 18 games they were due a defeat, but the manner of it was naive and lazy. They knew that Southampton would come at them, but were still surprised and overrun. Pressed constantly when in possession, they gave the ball away with disheartening regularity to add pressure to an already shaky defence. It was a fatal combination that ushered in all three Southampton goals.

Beckham's suicidal pass into his own area had almost let in Dodd after 20 seconds before the captain Steve Bruce committed a petulant foul on Charlton in retaliation for a perceived offence seconds earlier. It proved a costly piece of indiscipline. Le Tissier's free-kick found Monkou unchallenged five yards out, Schmeichel saved the header but the Dutch defender was first to pounce on the rebound.

Had Butt not wasted an inviting chance two minutes earlier the momentum of the match might have been different. But now it was fully with Southampton. Dodd was allowed a free shot from which he should have scored, and Le Tissier hit the post before Southampton's second goal arrived thanks to more sloppy play by United. This time Giggs lost the ball to Magilton, and he fed Neilson whose quick cross to the near post was swept in first time by Shipperley while Bruce and Neville watched him do it.

Up until this point United's sharpest attacks had been aimed at each other as they fought to apportion blame for the mess. But the culprit for Southampton's third goal was the normally impeccable Schmeichel, who overstretched himself coming for Shipperley's cross and palmed the ball down to Le Tissier.

Any other player might have panicked at finding the big Dane at his feet, but the skills of Southampton's mercurial genius are returning after his bout of England blues, and his nonchalant flick over the prostrate goalkeeper was followed by an equally calm shot inside the far post.

United really did have a strip torn off them at half-time. They emerged in blue and white, having lost patience with the away-day grey in which they have never won. It risked upsetting Umbro and the soccer authorities but they needed something. It did not work. Giggs scored a late consolation goal but the damage was too great to repair.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Kenya's Boston 1-2-3 party

MOSES TANUI led home more than 50,000 runners in the 100th staging of the the Boston marathon, the world's oldest, first held in 1897 when 15 runners started.

Tanui, last year's runner-up, became the seventh Kenyan winner in nine years, triumphing in 2hr 09min 16sec to collect the $100,000 first prize and book a place in his country's Olympic team.

Kenya's decision to hold their Olympic trials within this event made it inevitable that Africans would dominate the race. Kenyans filled seven of the first 10 places including the top five, with Ezekiel Bitok second and Cosmas Ndeti, chasing an unprecedented fourth consecutive title, third.

In the women's race Uta Pippig of Germany made it three wins in a row when she caught and passed Tegla Loruppe within sight of the finish in a winning time of 2.27.12.

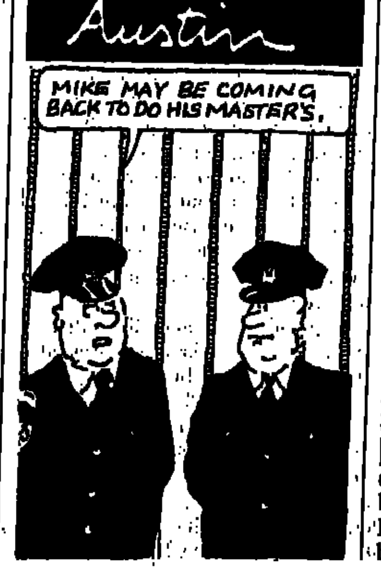
WITH just three months to go until the start of the Olympic Games in Atlanta a series of problems threaten to overshadow the giant party planned for the celebration of the Centennial Games. These include a lawsuit between the organisers and the designers of the Olympic Stadium, fears over the completion of the swimming arena following the collapse of two beams minutes after they were put up, growing local concern about crime and terrorism and worries that the privately funded event still needs $200 million to cover the $1.7 billion it will cost to stage.

The shortage of sponsorship money is so acute that organisers have sanctioned Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy as official "Game Shows of the Olympic Games" and sold the famous five-ring logo to companies making burglar alarms, hot dogs, air conditioners, and soap.

TROUBLE continues to follow boxing champion Mike Tyson. He faces new charges of sexual assault after a 25-year-old beauty salon owner telephoned Chicago police from hospital where she went for treatment, alleging that she had been battered and sexually molested by Tyson in a private booth at the Clique nightclub. The boxer is into the second of four years of parole after serving three years in prison for rape. Any serious breach would return him automatically to prison.

MICK McCARTHY, the Republic of Ireland football manager, has been banned from receiving FA Cup Final tickets for 10 years after two of the four he received for last year's match ended up being sold for £350 each on the black market. McCarthy is the most high-profile victim of investigations into the black market trade at the 1995 final. The FA has black-listed 36 individuals and organisations. McCarthy said: "I'm bitterly disappointed. I gave the tickets to a friend at face value and he told me he had attended the game with another friend and their respective sons. I believed him."

VINNIE JONES, British soccer's hard man, was ruled offside when he arrived as a self-appointed ambassador of sporting tolerance and fair play to attend a Council of Europe conference on sport in Amsterdam. The Wimbledon footballer was refused admission and the organisers even tried to throw him out of his hotel. However, when it was discovered that Jones, who has been shown the red card 11 times in his footballing career but is now trying to change his image, had been sent the invitation by mistake, he was allowed to attend the meeting, but strictly as an observer.



FIRST DIVISION Huddersfield Town have sacked striker Craig Whitington after he was banned by the Football Association from all activities connected with the game until November 1. Whitington was found guilty of misconduct after failing two separate drugs tests.

IRISHMAN Eamonn Loughran hit the canvas three times in 51 seconds to lose his WBO welterweight title to Jose Luis Lopez of Mexico at Liverpool. The challenger caught him completely by surprise with a devastating punch to the jaw and Loughran took a count of eight. Two more knockdowns followed before the referee stopped the fight.

AUSTRALIAN fast bowler Brendon Julian has signed for Surrey, filling the overseas player slot originally offered to but rejected by South African all-rounder Brian McMillan. The Western Australia left-armer replaces Waqar Younis, who will be touring with Pakistan, as overseas player. Julian has made seven Test appearances for his country since making his Test debut against England at Old Trafford in 1993.

THESE are anxious times for football fans. When Liverpool scored the late winner against Newcastle, Dominic Hourd, watching the game on TV, kicked out in frustration and accidently knocked the budgie's case off its stand. The bird died minutes later. The story appeared in a newspaper and Dominic was inundated with offers of replacement budgies. He turned them down, explaining: "If I had other budgies and Newcastle kept losing, I could become known as a serial budgie killer."

Football results and league tables

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 0, Tottenham 0; Chelsea 4, Leeds 1; Coventry 1, QPR 0; Man C 1, Sheff Wed 0, Middlesbrough 1, Wimbledon 2; Newcastle 1, Aston Villa 0, Nottm Forest 1, Blackburn 5; Southampton 3, Man Utd 1; West Ham 1, Bolton 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	35	22	7	6	64	35	**73**
Newcastle	34	22	4	8	62	35	**70**
Liverpool	34	19	8	7	66	31	**65**
Aston Villa	35	18	8	9	51	32	**62**
Arsenal	35	16	10	9	46	30	**58**
Tottenham	35	15	11	9	45	35	**56**
Everton	35	15	9	11	57	41	**54**
Blackburn	35	16	6	13	54	42	**54**
Nottm Forest	34	14	11	9	46	48	**53**
West Ham	35	14	7	14	41	47	**49**
Chelsea	35	12	12	11	43	40	**48**
Middlesbrough	36	11	10	15	35	46	**43**
Leeds	34	12	6	16	39	52	**42**
Wimbledon	35	10	10	15	53	65	**40**
Sheff Wed	35	10	8	17	46	55	**38**
Southampton	35	8	10	17	33	51	**34**
Man City	36	8	10	18	30	56	**34**
Coventry	35	7	12	16	40	60	**33**
QPR	36	8	6	22	35	54	**30**
Bolton	36	8	5	23	38	68	**29**

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division: Barnsley 0, Reading 1; Birmingham 4, Luton 0, Charlton 0, Derby 0; C Palace 2, Southend 0; Huddersfield 3, Millwall 0; Ipswich 2, Norwich 1; Oldham 0, Wolverhampton 0; Sheff Utd 0, Sunderland 0; Stoke 2, Portsmouth 1; Tranmere 1, Leicester 1; Watford 5, Port Vale 2; West Brom 3, Grimsby 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunderland	42	21	15	6	56	31	**78**
Derby	43	20	16	8	66	46	**76**
Crystal Palace	43	19	15	9	64	46	**72**
Charlton	41	16	17	8	53	42	**65**
Stoke	41	17	12	12	55	45	**63**
Ipswich	41	17	11	13	73	61	**62**
Huddersfield	42	17	11	14	59	53	**62**
Leicester	42	15	14	13	58	59	**59**
Birmingham	42	15	12	15	59	55	**57**
Sheff Utd	43	14	13	16	51	53	**55**
Southend	43	14	13	16	49	58	**55**
Barnsley	42	13	15	14	55	63	**54**
West Brom	42	16	6	18	54	63	**54**
Grimsby	41	14	12	15	50	58	**54**
Norwich	43	13	14	16	55	51	**53**
Wolverhampton	42	13	14	15	55	56	**53**
Port Vale	40	13	13	14	52	58	**52**
Millwall	43	13	12	18	41	59	**51**
Tranmere	41	12	14	15	55	56	**50**
Reading	41	11	16	14	47	55	**49**
Portsmouth	43	12	12	19	60	68	**48**
Oldham	41	11	13	17	49	47	**46**
Luton	41	10	11	20	36	57	**41**
Watford	41	7	17	17	50	63	**38**

Second Division: Brentford 0, Notts Co 0; Bristol Rvrs 1, Blackpool 1; Burnley 2, Peterborough 1; Carlisle 1, Wrexham 2; Chesterfield 1, Bristol C 1; Hull 1, Crewe 2; Swansea 2, Brighton 1; Swindon 2, Bournemouth 2; Walsall 2, Bradford 1; York 2, Wycombe 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swindon	40	23	13	4	64	30	**82**
Blackpool	43	22	12	9	63	37	**78**
Crewe	42	21	7	14	73	53	**70**
Oxford Utd	41	20	10	11	61	37	**70**
Notts County	41	19	13	9	55	38	**70**
Chesterfield	40	18	11	11	51	43	**65**
Wrexham	42	16	15	11	68	51	**63**
Bradford	42	19	6	17	63	64	**63**
Stockport	42	17	12	13	58	45	**63**
Bristol Rovers	42	18	9	15	54	57	**63**
Bristol City	43	14	15	14	50	53	**57**
Wycombe	42	14	14	14	57	55	**56**
Walsall	40	15	10	15	49	41	**55**
Brentford	43	14	13	16	39	46	**55**
Bournemouth	43	15	9	19	49	68	**54**
York	41	12	13	16	55	64	**49**
Shrewsbury	41	12	13	16	52	57	**49**
Rotherham	41	12	13	16	46	56	**49**
Peterborough	42	12	12	18	55	59	**48**
Burnley	40	12	11	17	50	62	**47**
Carlisle	42	10	13	19	53	66	**43**
Swansea	43	9	14	20	40	74	**41**
Brighton	42	9	10	23	42	62	**37**
Hull	42	5	16	21	33	64	**31**

Third Division: Barnet 5, Hartlepool 1; Bury 1, Torquay 0, Cambridge Utd 2, Doncaster 2; Chester 1, Rochdale 2; Colchester 2, Fulham 2; Gillingham 1, Exeter 0; Hereford 3, Leyton Orient 2; Lincoln 2, Mansfield 1; Plymouth 5, Scarborough 1; Preston 0, Northampton 3; Scunthorpe 1, Cardiff 1; Wigan 1, Darlington 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Preston	42	20	17	5	71	38	**77**
Gillingham	42	21	14	7	46	18	**77**
Bury	42	20	12	10	60	42	**72**
Wigan	43	20	10	13	60	51	**70**
Plymouth	42	19	12	11	63	46	**69**
Darlington	42	17	17	8	49	38	**68**
Barnet	43	17	15	11	59	41	**66**
Colchester	42	16	16	10	55	47	**64**
Chester	42	16	15	11	67	48	**63**
Hereford	40	16	14	10	52	41	**62**
Northampton	42	17	11	14	47	40	**62**
Exeter	43	13	16	14	43	48	**55**
Scunthorpe	41	14	12	15	56	52	**54**
Rochdale	42	14	11	17	54	55	**53**
Doncaster	42	14	10	18	44	56	**52**
Fulham	43	11	16	16	56	60	**49**
Lincoln	43	12	13	18	51	69	**49**
Mansfield	41	10	19	12	47	56	**49**
Hartlepool	42	11	13	18	43	58	**46**
Leyton Orient	43	12	10	21	41	56	**46**
Cambridge Utd	42	11	12	19	54	68	**45**
Cardiff	43	10	12	21	38	58	**42**
Scarborough	43	7	16	20	36	64	**37**
Torquay	42	5	13	24	29	73	**28**

AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD: Final: Rotherham 2, Shrewsbury 1.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aberdeen 2, Motherwell 1; Hibernian 1, Celtic 2; Kilmarnock 1, Falkirk 0; Raith 1, Hearts 3; Rangers 5, Partick 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	33	24	6	3	78	23	**78**
Celtic	33	21	11	1	62	22	**74**
Aberdeen	32	15	5	12	47	39	**50**
Hearts	33	15	5	13	52	51	**50**
Raith	33	11	6	16	37	52	**39**
Motherwell	33	9	11	13	28	33	**38**
Kilmarnock	33	10	8	15	37	49	**38**
Hibernian	33	10	8	15	40	55	**38**
Partick	32	8	5	19	26	54	**29**
Falkirk	33	6	5	22	29	53	**23**

First Division: Clydebank 2, Airdrie 1; Dumbarton 0, St Mirren 1; Dundee 1, Dunfermline 1; Hamilton 0, Greenock Morton 1; St Johnstone 1, Dundee Utd 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Dundee Utd (33-63); 2, Dunfermline (33-62); 3, St Johnstone (33-61).

Second Division: Berwick 4, Montrose 1; Clyde 2, East Fife 2; Forfar 2, Stranraer 2; Queen of South 0, Stirling 7; Stenhousemuir 0, Ayr 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Stirling (33-72); 2, East Fife (33-64); 3, Berwick (33-54).

Third Division: Brechin 0, Livingston 1; Caledonian Thistle 2, Cowdenbeath 0; East Stirling 1, Albion 1; Queen's Pk 0, Arbroath 0; Ross County 0, Alloa 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Livingston (33-65); 2, Brechin (33-60); 3, Caledonian Thistle (33-63).